

JERSEY BEAT

Issue 52 Fall/Winter 1994
Two Dollars



WGL

**NEW
BANDS**

The Figgs

DEADGUY

BOUNCING SOULS



MADBALL

EX-VEGAS

SOUND
advice





The Grip Weeds

"House of Vibes" 12 song CD/LP

"Mighty trunks of rhythm, lofty lyrical leaves into gleaming orange sunshine...The Grip Weeds ROCK and this is freaking incredible. ★★★★★"

- MUSIC PAPER, NYC.

"The mighty Grip Weeds have returned, remodeled and retooled for long lasting rock and roll goodness. The Grip Weeds have acquired guitar-mistress extraordinaire Kristin Pinell, and toughened their sound somewhat...Recorded at the famed House of Vibes...as rock solid (if not more) than anything in the previous Grip Weeds catalog... ★★★★★"

- THE EVIL EYE, NJ

"Poised for bigger things. They've gone from being a solid genre band in the Flamin' Groovies mold to being...well, not that much different, actually. But there's more variety, more muscle, more personality this time around. If the Goo Goo Dolls can do it, so can they."

- SOUND VIEWS, NYC

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9/16 - Maxwell's/Hoboken NJ

9/24 - NJ Transit Festival/Hoboken NJ

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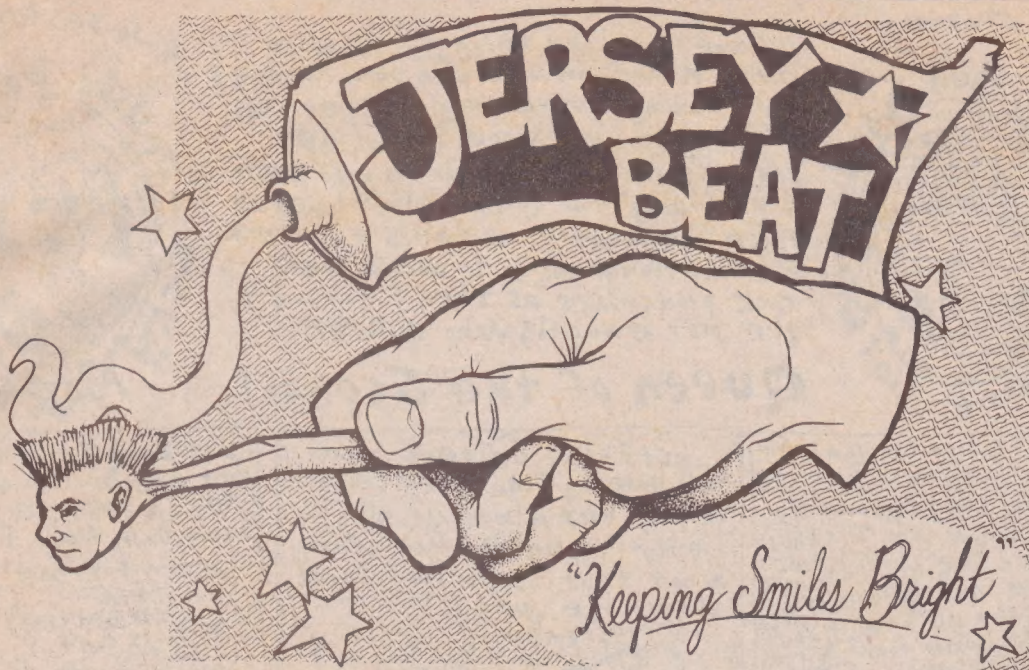
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Issue 52 Fall/Winter 1994

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*"My friends are getting famous
They're all on MTV,
Interviews in Rolling Stone
And I'm in Jersey Beat..."*

- Screeching Weasel



Thank you's to the following swell folks:
Mark at I'm Yr Type, Regina Joskow, Jeff
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and all the fans who bought all those copies
of #51, making it our most successful issue
ever. See you next year. - Jim Testa



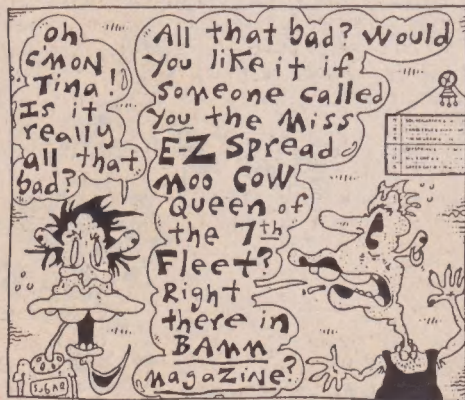
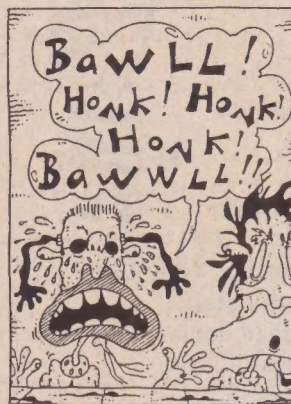
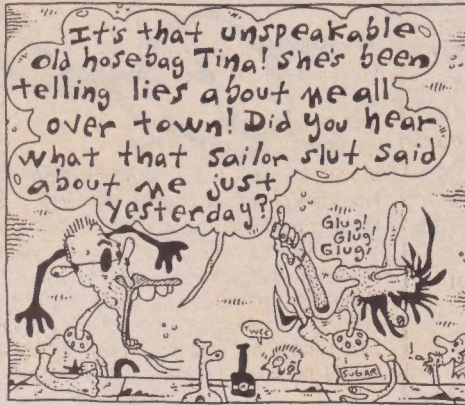
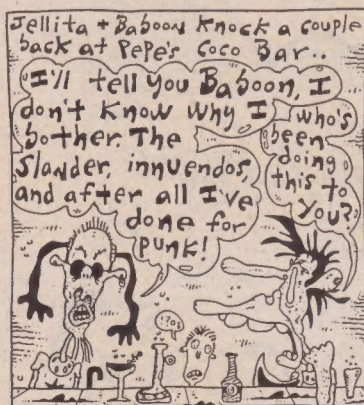
Featuring:



Sometimes the struggle to win Great Honors in Life can be a lonely one leading to much pain and personal suffering. And you know, Sometimes You just Want to sit down and have a good cry! You can't help it! Let us take a moment to witness the terrible emotional costs to our 2 punk rock princesses as they fight on to see just exactly who will be

Queen of the Scene!

Also Featuring:



From The Editor's Desk

This is where I get to talk a little about what's been going on here at the zine and make whatever comments I want about the state of the world. That's the whole point of publishing your own fanzine, of course. There's no one to tell you to shut up.

Things couldn't have turned out better with our last issue, which went to press a few weeks after Green Day's *Dookie* had been released. At the time the issue came out, it was really too early to tell what was going to happen with Green Day, let alone predict the amazing success of the Offspring's new album. So while we talked about the possibility of punk rock becoming part of the mainstream, we had no idea it would actually happen. But the proof is in the pudding, or in this case the Billboard Soundscan charts. As I write this, Green Day has been the second best selling album in the country for several weeks, with the Offspring - on the utterly independent Epitaph Records - close behind at number 6. And it wasn't that long ago that people were marvelling at Fugazi's ability to break into the Top 200!

The whole punk vs. mainstream debate has stirred up a lot of passion - besides the letters and e-mail I've received on the topic, practically everyone I've met over the last few months has had something to say on the matter. It was very gratifying to read those zine reviews - including *Maximum Rock N Roll's* - which actually understood that what we tried to do in that issue was not take a stand one way or the other, but simply present a forum where a lot of different opinions could be heard.

Now this issue, on the other hand, doesn't really try to do anything, other than present a bunch of new bands who we think are kinda cool, and worth checking out. The original idea was to make this an all-local bands issue, but when the opportunity to interview Pete Stahl (formerly of *Scream*, now in *Wool*) presented itself, it was too good to resist. So this is the mostly-local, mostly-new bands issue. I mean, what's the point of having rules if you're not going to bend them now and then?

If you like this zine, it would be great if you also ordered a copy of *Glut*, Jersey Beat's little brother of a zine, dedicated entirely to reviews of 7 inch singles. There's such an explosion of indie, DIY vinyl these days that it's impossible to keep up with it all, but *Glut* #3 at least offers a couple of hundred reviews of new singles that you can think about checking out. See the ad in this issue for ordering information. By the way, all

of the Jersey Beat compilation cassettes and our Video Fanzine are still in print. Send a SASE if you'd like to get a catalog.

That covers art and commerce, so there's isn't much

NEW & RECOMMENDED

These are records that came too late to include in the regular reviews section but were too good to leave out.

Bad Religion - *Stranger Than Fiction* (Atlantic) For some reason, I've never been much of a Bad Religion fan, but this album is incredible - all the more so because, even though it's the band's major label debut and theoretically their big "breakout" lp, the lyrics are dark, challenging, and most of all, fiercely intelligent. Compared to most of the pop punk drivel around nowadays, in fact, these songs read more like someone's doctoral thesis than a "pop" album. Lyrics don't matter though if the music doesn't do it, and the songs here rock with BR's usual unpredictable tempo and chord changes, rampaging melodies, and singalong choruses. Brett Gurewitz' savage ode to self-loathing, "Incomplete," could be the anthem for the Green Day generation that "Smells Like Teen Spirit" was for Generation X: "Mother/father/look at your little monster/ I'm a hero/ I'm a zero/ "I'm the butt of the worst joke in history..."

Crocodile Shop - *Celebrate The Enemy* (Tinman, PO Box 1114, New Brunswick NJ 08901) This is that industrial techno stuff, with computer-generated beats and riffs grinding behind Michael Hale's oddly distorted vocals and political lyrics. Mick writes the *Danse Assembly* column for this zine and is an old friend of mine, so I'm far from an objective reviewer, but I find this imaginative, persuasive, and quite danceable (assuming I was the type to get up and dance to techno.)

Girls Against Boys - *Cruise Yourself* (Touch & Go) While every previous GvB release has had its moments, they've all been inconsistent; finally, they've got it right. Scott McCloud's nicotine-stained yowl - ugly yet sexy, suggestively sinister and kinky - starkly contrasts Eli Janney's eerie keyboards and ethereal background vocals, as the dead solid rhythm section throbs an undulating beat beneath shifting patterns of dissonance and melody. It all comes together to create a sonic groove that's as seductive and inescapable as a nasty undertow on a deserted beach. So what if you drown? What a way to go.

Kevin Salem - *Soma City* (Roadrunner) As singer-songwriters go, Kevin Salem brings fairly typical Dylanesque vocals (pinched, nasal, and a little affected) coupled with clever, intelligent lyrics about coupling and surviving in New York City and a corrosive guitar attack reminiscent of Neil Young as his most searing. He's got a terrific band behind him too, with David Dunton's honky tonk keyboards adding a nice Rolling Stones/*Exile On Main Street* touch.

Pink Lincolns - *Suck & Bloat* (Stiff Pole, PO Box 20721, St Pete FL 33742) The Pink Lincolns were punk before Ben Weasel bought his first 7 inch, and they're still the nastiest, snottiest motherfuckers on the block. Think of the *Queers* on PCP and you get an idea of the addictive, snarling ferocity of these guys. And they're almost as old as your dad, which makes them even cooler.

more to say. Stay well, play safe, read lots of zines, support local bands, and be good to each other. See you next time.

- Jim Testa

Guest Editorial

Punk rock mysticism

by Greg Matherly

The hills of Tennessee nestle a number of fancies that do not quite fit the stereotypical image of the South. Punk rock is one of them. I remember when I was a youngster and the punk rock bug first bit me in the night. It seemed the answer to all of my "secluded in dead-end South" angst and it was, for the most part, the means of my escape from the clutches of my parent's narrow-minded heritage. I realized how wide the world was and of how much I could experience within my given lifetime. The chase was on. As I grew, the friends I made through punk outweighed everything and they still remain to this day, although everything else has changed. The punk rock still exists but the mind behind the listener is forever in gratitude for what it owes. Whether it comes from punk rock, drugs, the age in which we live, or simply fate -- the paisley covered slam-dancer keeps popping up in my dreams. Don't get me wrong, I'm not about to blend two stereotypes together for sake of expression. I have seen it and I know it lives. There is a place where the green-haired freaks' peculiar fashion transcends Doc Martens and flannel. I will explain.

There is a point at which some people drift through companionship into -- excuse the hippy term -- love and forward into more vibrant territory -- encompassing self, religious belief, and the universe. Now if you are one of these people who have discovered a higher purpose in existence and you just happen to be versed in punk rock, well... it's going to be hard to choose between that Bad Religion show and the next Rainbow Gathering.

Punk rock mysticism, as I have termed it, displays itself through its own medium. Countless bands, writers, and spoken word performers are constantly pointing the way, doing their duty as given them by elevated apparitions. Hey, everybody, it's 1994 and it only makes sense that "Time" is sooooo abstract; so if there is a God, Alien, New World, Whatever -- wouldn't the doctrine for the commonfolk change with the people? Punk is relatively new but the metaphysical message of all good art remains unchanged and it has been witnessed in today's extravagant counter-culture.

When punk first started it was a revolt against society, more or less, and it chose to group up the ones who noticed. Today there are more self-awareness bands than ever before, most of which have their roots in anarchy and chaos. That is its natural evolution. These days, you are not a decent band unless real humans can relate or you possess the power to detach the listener from his/her immediate reality. This requires the bands to be honest with themselves or risk being labeled... "Cheesy". Sounds religious enough, huh?

Music is one of the most moving dramas ever to grace the senses, outside of near death experiences and drugs, and in today's musical culture the "Alternative" scene is the one with the most force. I'm not hinting at a revolution that will arise and spark the nation into regressing to stripped man living for compassion and leaving behind corrupted power games, but it is not far-fetched to say that the next generation will be a bit more grounded thanks to the present upheaval. We are far from the sixties (we all know those ideals never quite worked out) and it seems as though we've been working backwards ever since. There is hope, however, in the motivation of numerous derelicts roaming the indy scene in search of open ears.

This may sound like a bunch of bunk but when you consider ideas that were once unlikely have now become mundane, you can see mankind's mental evolution flowering into the unity of a heightened order. If Buddha were alive today he might be in the spoken word circuit and Jesus Christ would probably be fronting a psychedelic noise band, both professions residing in the modern outspoken underground. The genre kaleidoscope integration we have been witnessing even seems symbolic of Earth life itself.

This subject so loosely ties together as of now and given the many factors involved, the outside observer would look at it as pretentious to talk of a generation of X's as a people with a higher sense of knowledge. And to the punk who hasn't figured out that every single thing happens for a specific reason, I write not as a true punk but as a poser. The judgment is your call. If I am to be quoted on anything here let it be: Take observations for their worth, and nothing more. The experience and work are solely up to the individual.

This is my view on today's largest counter-culture movement and the numerous artistic sub-divisions. One goal, several routes. So smile as wide as you can, climb onto the stage and dive into the great void that swarms with green-haired paisleys, Amen.

FEEDBACK

C/O Jersey Beat

OR

The Useless Press

P.O. Box 413

Bristol, TN 37621-0413

Letters To The Editor

Jersey Beat,

I came to New Jersey from Albuquerque, New Mexico. I found a little record shop, where I picked up your magazine. I was excited to read it, but disappointed that almost every article talked about "selling out."

It started off with Nirvana. All of a sudden, people that had really liked Nirvana before stopped listening to them because they were now "mainstream." This is ridiculous - to stop listening to a band, not because they changed their style of music, but because they make more money and are getting radio play. If a punk rock attitude is about doing what you want/listening to what you want, and fuck what anyone else thinks, then to stop listening to a band because their audience is bigger is just the opposite of punk rock. It seems like more people have deserted the band they used to like because they *think* it's the "punk rock" thing to do, not because they don't like the music.

Now once again, I have to hear about it with Green Day, a band I have loved for years. The first time I went to hear Green Day play in Albuquerque, it was at a friend's party. Unfortunately they could not show up because their van broke down somewhere along the way. The next time they came to town, they were going to play in a tiny little punk rock club, but the police came and wouldn't let them play because the place wasn't fire zoned. Finally, they came with Bad Religion. Although it sucked to pay \$15 when it used to be only \$5, I was glad to finally see them play. Now instead of being angry that they signed with a major label, I'm happy for them. Doing tours where they get buses and hotel rooms, I'm sure, beats vans that break down and sleeping on friends' living room floors. And now it's easier for their listeners to see them play.

You're a "sellout" when you change your music and ideas to please the mainstream, NOT because you sign on a major label. If you're too punk rock to listen to the bands you like, then maybe you're not punk rock at all.

Sally Plagens
Albuquerque, NM

Dear Sally,

I agree with almost everything you said, but I hope your anger wasn't aimed at us. We've never turned our back on a band we liked just because they signed to a major label. Otherwise you wouldn't have read about Jawbox and Green Day in our last issue! And by the way, last we heard, Green Day was still touring in the same

van (a converted bookmobile) they used when they were on Lookout. At least, they drove it up to Woodstock!

Dear Jim Testa & Jersey Beatsters,

I can't believe you don't receive letters! I finished reading issue #51 and thought I'd respond to a few things. I'm glad you dedicated an issue to the debate of major vs. indie labels. After all the screaming MRR did over the evils of majors, it's nice to see the other side. To me, punk is the way you are, like an essence (well, now I'm making it sound like perfume) the way you carry yourself - which reflects in your music/zine/projects. I really disagree with the comment (Mike) Gitter made over the underground being mainstream. I think not! I'm sure most people have heard of Pearl Jam, but most people still don't know what a zine is, or that you can buy records through the mail. He also said that punk is no longer being ignored because the "grown ups" have changed. Really? Most of the grownups in my world still think Michael Bolton is the greatest. If they're really "hip," they like an alternative band like Counting Crows. Yohannon is elitist when he sees them as the enemy and says "Fuck them," but the main reason (or one of them) that we love our little punk haven is that it is *ours*. We still make a difference in it and our support still touches the artist. Mind you, I'm just talking about underground punk, not bands going major, of which I have mixed emotions. It depends on why they did it.

When I heard that Kurt Cobain died, I felt this unbelievable sinking feeling. It was awful. Just a month before, I had read the Nirvana biography, so I felt like I really knew him. It was very painful. He was a talented, beautiful person who had his whole life ahead of him. I wasn't filled with cool, not caring attitude or cynicism. It has nothing to do with my generation, just being a more sensitive person. He sang about the unwashed, unloved children from divorced baby-boomer homes and it reached me.

The article "Maximum Rock N Roll & The Future Of Punk" was very eye opening. The thought that one person has so much influence over the scene. I never quite clicked with MRR, it seems as if I was picking up a book in the middle and not understanding the inside jokes/inside feuds. It's still a wonderful source. You have to learn to doubt his extreme opinions on what's not punk.

The interview with Larry from Lookout was really sad! I read his goodbye column in MRR and I really understood his feelings on "punk" being a word without meaning. He says that punk is going to die. I think he's forgetting those of us who won't let it

die. Those kids who go to Jawbox concerts - five years from now will pick up guitars and keep it alive. It may be updated, but the undertone will remain. I will always be punk and listen to punk music. It has nothing to do with fashion or being "cool." It's just who I am and what I love. If it's no longer cool or if it dies, we'll still be around to pick up the pieces and put it together. The few who knew what it really meant. That it wasn't a sound, or a lifestyle, but a common love. For some of us, it's unconditional and that's why it's always going to be alive. Because we won't let it die. MTV or Rolling Stone might say so, but we'll still be in the shadows of the pop culture continuing to produce what we love.

Monte'

Dear Monte',

Thanks for your letter. Just to clear up one point, Larry Livermore didn't say that he thought punk would die. He said punk "as we know it today" might die, or change, but that the spirit of doing-it-yourself and being part of something that wasn't in the mainstream would always be there. I think your letter proves that.

Dear Fine Folks at Jbeat,
Re: The Selling Of Punk

Anyone who honestly believes that the majors are becoming "more punk" and the bands they're signing (Shudder To Think, Jawbox, etc.) don't have to compromise their stand on anything is just a blind optimist who believes that if "WE" just all stick together, then WE'll all be happy people who know that we possess no singularity because we all submit to THEM. Yes, it is a conspiracy and it runs deeper than you think. It's a feeling of almost complete desensitization being forced upon us to keep up from being happy. Look at Kurt Cobain (well, his *grave*.) Yes, when I first heard that he was dead I was apathetic, but then I turned on my tv that night to discover that MTV had become the 24-hour-Kurt-tv-network. Society, nay, THEY create positions, places for people to fill in, and it doesn't matter who it is as long as *everything* runs smoothly. So Kurt became a rich, famous rock star to most, and a rich-famous-rockstar to some. The term "selling out" is now too tired, eh? But if I could still make lots of \$\$ doing something that I loved, should and would I? Sure, I'd have to refrain my titling my record "Corporations Suck" but I could still play with my friends and feel better about the negative responses from the zine-eds whose opinions I used to value. Besides, now thousands of people flock to our shows, so who cares about the few who used to come before?

HA!

Where's my dignity and self-worth?

"Okay, okay, it's not *that* bad," you say. "Sure, the DIY thing, but, you know..."

The *problem* is that there will always be a couple of bands willing to sign and the whole DIY [scene] comes off as a silly, self-righteous, idealistic obsession that just doesn't pay. It's really sad. If they could just stick to their guns long enough and not give up - 'cause once you go major, there's no turning back - you just can't go back to the way things were because you're regarded as a traitor, and are treated as such. Besides, whenever a bunch of bands want to get together and put out a compilation for Planned Parenthood or a benefit record for some other organization, and they run into all sorts of problems involving their record companies.

The idea was an is to control free communication. Music is so important because of its nature - it's alive, it breathes, and because of all the other things that go along with it. And it's also the most marketable. Besides, the fact that the target audience is under 35, with disposable income, you're likely to listen to a record plenty of times compared to reading a book (once, twice, or maybe 3x.) When you're most vulnerable, they launch an attack on your senses - yes, you are free to do as you are told! Now, at first it may seem outrageous, but don't music and political activism go hand in hand? Even being apolitical is political nowadays. But it doesn't stop there. The Giuliani administration is cracking down on street artists, not people who sell those fake watches but people who earn a living by making and selling art on the street. The city is also going after people who put up flyers - on public property. It used to be that a person had to be caught in the act of posting something, but now you can no longer rput up a poster if your dog is lost or want someone to babysit for you because under "a rebuttable assumption," you will be fined if your names appears on the poster. And what about that notorious little chip Big Brother's been pushing? And ads on the Net? Censorship of public access? Florida going after a guy who puts out comix? And there's more.

The point of all this is to break up any sense of unity within a community,

whatever that community may be.

But I think that people find ways to find each other, and our existence is becoming more globally interdependent. It's always exciting to open your mailbox and find something, anything, from a person from a different part of the world. A person you never thought you'd come in contact with and will probably never meet, who shares a common interest with you or sends you something they put a lot of effort into and you do the same. Or you sit in front of your (computer) screen, ranting away and others respond. It's anarchic - we're slipping out of their soapy hold! (It's a trap!)

One final thought - did you notice that the same tactics are being used to sell gangsta rap as well?

Hey, who's bitter?

Angele K./Epiphyte
PO Box 20410, New York NY 10021

Dear Angela,

I understand where you're coming from and it often does seem like we're all living under the repressive thumb of some global conspiracy. However, from what I've seen of the people who run major labels and MTV, the Giuliani administration, and the Florida prosecutors who almost sent Mike Diana to jail because they thought his comic books were "obscene," I don't think any of them are smart enough to mastermind a global conspiracy.

Jim,

Concerning the questions raised in issue #51, all I have to say, in a nutshell, is that any person, musician, or band that says signing to a major label is selling out or going mainstream can go #\$\$%% themselves! Selling out is the process of compromising our musical intentions for a profit or gain. So if a band writes a bunch of songs and people really like them, what is so wrong with them wanting to get their music in the hands of as many people as possible? What's so wrong with having people who can take care of all the bullshit involved with promoting a band, so the band can concentrate on its music?

What no one understands is that just because a band signs a fairly lucrative deal to make a record doesn't mean they are going to be rolling in dough, living the good

life. Quite the contrary, hardly anybody makes any money doing original music (or writing about original music!) or promoting the original music scene. I've never made any money, and any money I have made has gone to pay back debts from recording, postage, promotion, etc.

Too many bands in this area are misguided as to how to promote their music. They want to get signed and make a record, but don't appreciate the fact that no one is going to swoop down out of the sky and lift them out of total obscurity and get them on MTV. They think it's going to be easy street once they get "discovered." What a load of crap. Bands need a top five list of things to do to get "discovered," so here's mine (drum roll please):

5. Don't think someone is going to give you money to put out your first release. This rarely happens so face up to the fact you're going to have to scrape up the money to do it yourself.

4. Be prepared to spend tons of money at the post office. Bands that don't have a well-maintained mailing list are spinning their wheels.

3. Capitalize on every opportunity to advertise your band for free. Send your music to newspapers and fanzines and hope they write about you. Do lots of radio interviews and make sure stations are announcing your upcoming gigs.

2. Support other bands in your area the way you'd like them to support you.

1. Write good songs. The first four are the easy ones, the last is the toughest...

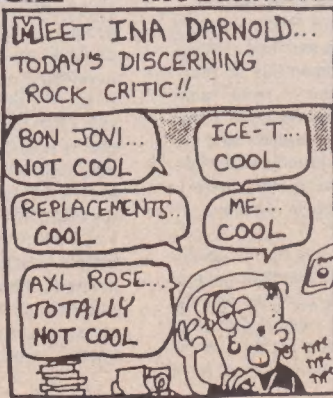
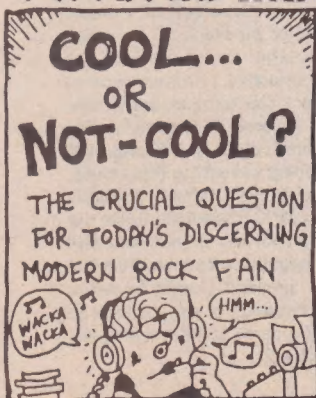
Good luck!

Name withheld

The person who wrote this letter is a member of a popular NJ band with a lot of experience. I concur with everything he says, especially the part about self-promotion. It never ceases to amaze me how LAZY bands are about promoting themselves. For every five bands I write to asking for a demo tape or a presskit, maybe one or two actually both to reply.

Jersey Beat welcomes your letters. Please be sure to include your name and return address on the letter if you want a reply! Write us at Jersey Beat, 418 Gregory Avenue, Weehawken NJ 07087, or email us at jimjbeat@aol.com.

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SURFIN' THE NET

Potholes & Roadkill From The Information Highway



You can learn more by lurking on the Internet than you can from a full week of panel-hopping at the New Music Seminar. The following is a series of messages that appeared on the Chug-changa-I Internet list, on the ever-popular topic of indie vs. major labels. The first was posted by "Roze," who turned out to be Rose of Poster Children. The band will be releasing their third album this fall on Sire Records. The "SA-ELEC" who replies is Steve Albini. The Nils who replies next is Nils Bernstein of Sub Pop. All of the participants gave us permission to reprint this enlightening and informative exchange of ideas.

From: Roze
Topic: My band

My band has been on a bunch of different indie labels, and we finally ended up on Sire/Reprise, which is part of Warners. We were on Twin/Tone and had huge problems with them (ie. no distribution, the head of T/T told us he only wanted us for his catalog; wasn't going to support us in any way, we DIDN'T get to do our own cover art, and they didn't have enuf \$\$ to repress our records when they sold out, so no one could ever find our records, anywhere). We were scared to sign to a major because we knew all the horror stories; we had plenty of counseling from Mr. Albini, for which I'm thankful. We had to sign to a major because T/T owned us for 2 more records; we had to be bought off.

Being on Sire has been wonderful for us. We choose who we want to work w/ on our records. We have enuf \$\$ to spend more time on our records. We get to tour any time we want. We get to do our own cover art. We make and sell our own T-Shirts. We've still got the same booking agent, and Sire has nothing to do with the prices of our shows. Also.. Sire's the first label to ever pay us royalties. And they pay on time, without our asking. Our pleasant experience w/ Sire could be due to the fact that we've already put out other records on indie labels so they knew what to expect from us, but more likely, it's because Warner Bros seems to have a lot of integrity.

What are some ways to not get screwed over on a major label? (Assuming yr not cool enuf to get on T&G or Dischord or another good indie)

- 1) Sign to the label where the most amount of people seem to like your band.
- 2) Sign to a label after you've got a "fan base."
- 3) Sign w/ an A&R guy who seems important to the label and who probably won't get fired soon. See how many higher-ups you can meet when you're courting the label.
- 4) Ask your A&R guy how many records he really thinks you'll sell. If he says, "at Least 100,000," ask him what happens if you don't.
- 5) Try not to act like an idiot-rockstar after you sign. Don't trash hotel rooms and charge tons of room-service when the label is paying for it.
- 6) Do NOT have unrealistic expectations of what being a "major label band" is all about. You're still the same band except you just took out a big loan from a record company.
- 7) Free Money: Avoid as often as possible. You can get a huge signing advance, recording advance, tour support, equipment advances, etc. You can get \$\$ for anything from yr label, if you've got a reason. (Costumes!) But the more \$\$ you take (think of it as

borrowing, because it's recoupable) the more the label will be on your case to make it back. One day, some "evil money-grubbing" accountant big-whig is going to look in your account and say "Hm... this band got \$250,000 advance, plus \$50,000 tour support... and only sold 30,000 records??? Hell, let's kick them off the label! We can sign 5 new bands for that much money!" Or worse, they'll "help you" sell more records - Get that band to dress more grunge; that's what the kids are "into"... And let's make them kick out that bass player and get a chick; that'll sell more records." "On second thought, let's just fire that A&R guy."

8) Have a manager you can trust before you sign. Otherwise, after you sign, the label will "help" you pick one. If the label wants you to get a "mgmt company" (an entity that exists only to make \$\$ off of you) then you will probably have to placate them (\$\$\$) by signing a publishing contract (more free \$\$\$! but 15% to mgmt, and you don't own all yr songs anymore).

9) Sign to a stable label with a good reputation. Ask other bands on the label about it. Even if you have "complete artistic control" written in your contract, the label can still refuse to put out yr record. Then you say, "HEY! You HAVE to put out this record, just like this! You're breaking our contract!" And they say, "OK, Sue us!" And you do. And you have to find a California lawyer, because all contracts are written under CA or NY law, it costs you tons of \$\$, and while you wait, you're sitting on yr ass w/ no record to tour on. So much for "complete artistic control." Better to sign to a label with proven integrity. (We signed to WB because we figured if a label is going to put out a band that sounds as weird as Dinosaur, My Bloody Valentine, or Babes In Toyland, (or The Boredoms!) we'd probably be fine.

10) Always have a lawyer or experienced friend look over any contract or memo that a major label gives you and get them to explain worst case scenarios to you.

Once again, my experience with a major label has been unique. Also, our band's perspective may be different than others'; we might be more pessimistic - or realistic - in setting goals for our band. But major labels are changing now, and giving their artists a lot more leeway. Just remember to explore all sides of a story; that's how you'll gain the most knowledge.

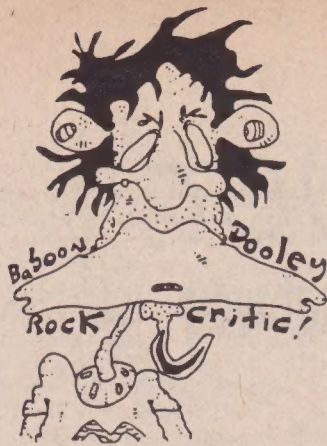
Also, here's some questions people always ask me and the answers I give them..

Q: WHY are show tix so expensive??

A: Because some bands and some concert promoters are stupid and think that they can ask for more \$\$ just because the band is on a major label. Sometimes the band needs to ask for more \$\$ because they have decided to take a tour bus (hell, they're a Major Label Band now.) That's pretty stupid, isn't it. Also, bigger clubs have bigger overheads; they have to pay all those bouncers; playing a small place costs less, so the promoter doesn't have to make so much \$\$ to break even. My band has to fight for lower ticket prices all the time. It's weird; you'd think the promoters would catch on and lower the prices, but they just don't.

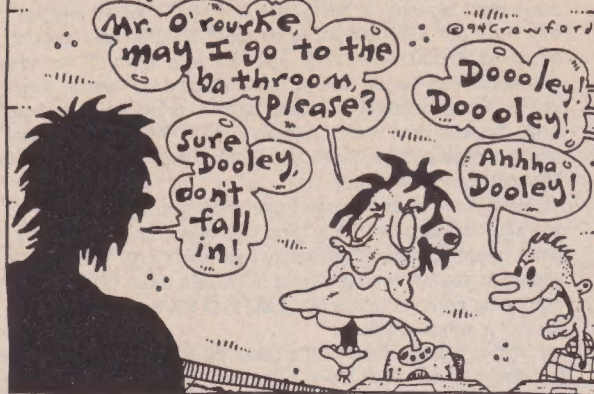
Q: Why are some bands' T-Shirts so expensive?

A: 1) The club almost always takes a % of a band's merch now,

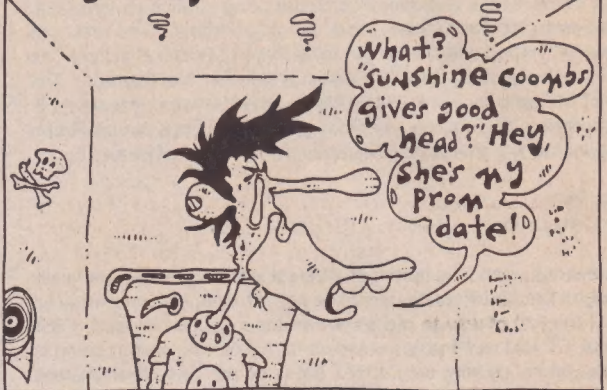


Hey! Baboon Dooley was there at the Glorious Beginnings of the **INTERNET** !

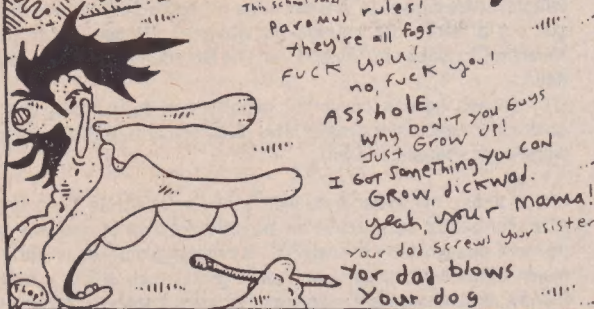
In the past there was only one place to go to get this kind of action.



That's right, the partition walls of your high school mens room!



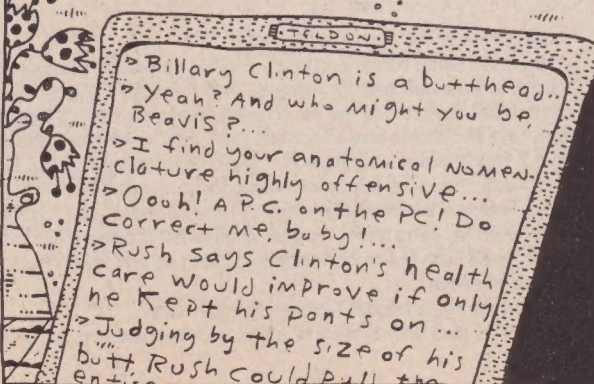
There, where privacy and anonymity were guaranteed, your opinions, no matter how inflammatory, could not only be freely stated, but also refuted in the strongest possible language.



Today, thanks to the steady advancement of all appropriate technologies, the computer industry has found a way to turn this primal need to communicate freely into a profitable enterprise. The Internet!



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especially ■ they're on a major label.

2) Sometimes the band has a Merchandising Deal. The Merch Co. gives the band a \$20,000 advance (More free money!!) and then proceeds to sell anything w/ the band's name on it, for any price the merchandiser deems necessary to make back that \$20,000. In addition, the Merchandising company pays some toe-shaped guy to come along on the bus and sell the band's merchandise; he might not know one thing about the band; it's just his job. He also forces all the opening bands to sell their merchandise at the same price as the headliner and also limits the amount of merch they can sell. He also takes a cut of the opening band's merchandise. (Do I sound like I'm speaking from experience?) You can sometimes sell your shirts out on the street, but sometimes the club ■■■■■ get really, really mad.

- Rose

From: SA-ELEC (Steve Albini)
Subject: Re: Roze's post

> better to get 2 sides of ■ story than just one. Plus, I hate hearing generalizations about all major label guys being evil money-grubbing bastards; it's like calling all Russians "godless commie pinkos."

Generalizations are a convenient way of saying things like "This may not be true in any one case, but the odds are extremely good that the case is such." This is a common rhetorical feature, and its ■■■■ shouldn't upset you. People generalize about things with validity all the time. This particular careening car full of sports fans may very well yield right-of-way to me as a pedestrian, but in general, I will choose to stay on the curb until they pass. Masked men with overcoats ■■■■ greeted with suspicion in banks. This is not latent anti-coat-and-maskism, it is common sense.

> My band has been on a bunch of different indie labels, and ■■■■ finally ended up on Sire/Reprise, which is part of Warners. We ■■■■ on Twin/Tone and had huge problems with them

Nobody said the "indie" world was a bed of roses. There are sleazeballs galore in that dominion too.

> (ie. no distribution, the head of T/T told us he only wanted us for his catalog; wasn't going to support us in any way, we DIDN'T get to do our own cover art, and they didn't have enuf \$\$ to repress our records when they sold out, so no one could ever find our records, anywhere). We ■■■■ scared to sign to a major because we knew all the horror stories; ■■■■ had plenty of counseling from Mr. Albini, for which I'm thankful. We had to sign to a major because T/T owned us for 2 more records; ■■■■ had to be bought off.

This is becoming an all-too-common phenomenon. Greedy "indie" labels are signing bands to long-term contracts, then investing just enough money in the record to stir interest in the band. At that point they sandbag and start looking for nibbles from big record companies. If they sell too many of the album, then the big label won't ■■■■ interested in buying it along with the remainder of the artist's contract. This is exactly how the Cleveland Browns used to behave. Despite having outstanding players, the team was a doormat because they kept selling off any promising players rather than invest in them themselves.

Twin Tone has done quite well by selling bands in the past, having once had ■ piece of your band, Soul Asylum, the Jayhawks, Mekons and Babes in Toyland, and it's no secret that Sub Pop has made more money from selling bands than records lately.

(The Chicago band) Hardvark is in that situation now, with Cargo having grudgingly sold under 2,000 of their record, but making sure the band gets flown to New York for a \$300 Thai power dinner with Geffen. Having seen ■ few of the freakish contracts Dutch East India

has been proffering lately (Homestead, Rockville) it's obvious they're working the same angle.

Bands often think that a long-term contract is some form of security. It is in fact a letter of indenture which may be sold to the highest bidder. Bands ought to remember that their strongest position is one where they have no future obligation to the label.

Bands often cite poor distribution ■■■■ to go to a major label. Often this poor distribution is intentional. Fugazi have sold something like 300,000 copies of an album with independant distribution, so the notion that "people can't get our records" is a spurious one, unless somebody's fucking up. Hell, my band Big Black has sold 100,000 copies of an album with ■ dirty title, and Shellac has sold 26,000 7" singles. Poor distribution in the indie world is ■ myth.

> Our pleasant experience w/ Sire could be due to the fact that we've already put out other records on indie labels so they knew what to expect from us, but more likely, it's because Warner Bros seems to have a lot of integrity.

You've been very lucky so far. It has so-far been in Warner's interest to pay you, so you have been paid. The moment they think you're not an asset, you have no leverage to get anything out of them. As for their integrity, you need only check with ■■■■ of your friends on other WEA labels to get a number of horrific stories (Atlantic's treatment of Eleventh Dream Day, Big Dipper and others, and Loud Music's butchering of their deals with the Mekons and Glass Eye come to mind), or ask ■■■■ about the \$3,200 they never paid me (because they succeeded in destroying the band in question).

> 2) Sign to ■ label after you've got a "fan base."

Excellent point, which was hammered home the other night at the Hardvaark/Eric's Trip/Cell show. The joint was full for Hardvaark (an excellent and weird band), half-full for Eric's Trip (a weird band), and bone empty by the time Cell (a band) had played three songs, despite their being tapped by Sonic Youth and subsequent megahit Geffen album.

> 7) Free Money: Avoid as often as possible. You can get ■ huge signing advance, recording advance, tour support, equipment advances, etc. You can get ■ for anything from yr label, if you've got a reason.

Assuming you have an iron will. Many labels will not allow a band to be frugal, since this strengthens the band's position. Again, speak with people who've been through it for a few years and you'll get an amazing litany of ridiculous stories. Material Issue had to remix an album because the tambourine (!) wasn't loud enough for the label. They had one of those "total artistic control" contracts you hear about. That means the band can do whatever it wants, and if the label whines enough, the band will eventually do what the label tells them to, rather than risk having the label be less than enthusiastic about the album.

Remixing is probably the most common way a label can get an artist to blow money after the fact, but the label can be equally manipulative with videos, tour promotion, publicity -- you name it. Remember, if the label spends the money on your behalf, then the label makes friends with the people they spend it on (studios, producers, directors, promotion guys, publicists, radio stations), and it costs them nothing, since it's your money they're spending. It is not usually presented in black and white terms (i.e. you must remix this song, you must have a higher profile tour, even if it loses you money) -- It's usually presented as an "opportunity" for your band- "Hey, I can get you the Faith No More opening slot" at \$100 a show; you transport yourself, or "Wouldn't you like to get another pair of ears in on the project; just to make ■■■■ everything's as good as it can be? I happen to know that Butch Vig (Flood/Jellybean Benitez/Andy Wallace/Dick Urine) would love to remix a track or two for you."

> 8) Have a manager you can trust before you sign. Otherwise, after you sign, the label will "help" you pick one. If the label wants you to get a "mgmt company" (an entity that exists only to make \$\$\$ off of you) then you will probably have to placate them (\$\$\$) by signing a publishing contract (more free \$\$\$! but 15% to mgmt, and you don't own all yr songs anymore).

I remember hearing a story (maybe apocryphal) that Atlantic were dealing directly with a band (I want to say Eleventh DD again, but I'm not sure), but somebody told them they had to have a manager, because the label staff weren't willing to speak directly to the "talent". They didn't care who it was, as long as there was a manager. The band then started using a fictitious name whenever they called, as "manager," and eventually got to hear much insider stuff about how the band was being manipulated by the label.

> 9) Sign to a stable label with a good reputation. Ask other bands on the label about it. Even if you have "complete artistic control" written in your contract, the label can still refuse to put out yr record. Then you say, "HEY! You HAVE to put out this record, just like this! You're breaking our contract!" And they say, "OK, Sue us!" And you do. And you have to find a California lawyer, because all contracts are written under CA or NY law, it costs you tons of \$\$, and while you wait, you're sitting on yr \$\$\$ w/ no record to tour on. So much for "complete artistic control." Better to sign to a label with proven integrity. (We signed to WB because I figured if a label is going to put out a band that sounds as weird as Dinosaur, My Bloody Valentine, or Babes In Toyland, (or The Boredoms!) we'd probably be fine.

This point is more important for independant labels, since major labels can be so huge and fragmented that a division may behave very badly for a while, while another keeps itself pretty straight, then the personell changes again (they seem to rotate staff about hourly some places), and things get weird again. At an independant label, it's usually the same people there year after year, and their reputations are earned one band at a time. I always make this recommendation, and very few people ever follow up on it, but a band should call EVERY SINGLE BAND that has ever been on the label BEFORE they sign, and get a detailed report on how the label treated them. I doubt you would encourage a band to sign with Twin Tone after your experience with them, Rose, in the same way that I try to warn bands off of Dutch East India. If bands would do this, then labels like Restless/Relativity, would have to straighten-up or close shop.

> 10) Always have a lawyer or experienced friend look over any contract or memo that a major label gives you and get them to explain worst case scenarios to you.

This is assuming your label will even abide by the terms of the contract. As you said, there's nothing (nothing) you can do to make them do the things they promise you they will. If they don't, you have no leverage, since they have your money. Even if you thought you could win a suit, it would destroy you. That's why nobody has ever come out of a suit like that intact. Heard anything from George Michael lately? He hasn't even got a trial date set yet and his career has been shoeboxed.

> But major labels are changing now, and giving their artists a lot more leeway.

That's their P.R. I have yet to see much evidence of it, and I'd bet my house against a stack of Paw cutouts that things won't change soon.

Two things ring true in this whole discussion: 1) Things won't necessarily be better for a band on a major label than on an independant label (ask Silverfish or the late FIREHOSE) in terms of public profile or income, and 2) The efficiency of the operation is much lower in terms of red tape and money spent. That said, there are many "independant" labels -- most affiliated with a distributor,

importer or other industry establishment -- who will fuck you just as bad as the big labels. THIS DOES NOT MEAN YOU MUST PUT UP WITH IT. It is up to you to check-out the people you do business with, and this is easier on the independant level, since the number of people you have to chase down is smaller.

>
> all right.. Flame Away!! <gulp>
>

No flame required. Your post states succinctly what is wrong with most of the business practices that the big labels take for granted. Wouldn't it be nice if bands could be on labels operated by their friends, who did things for them on a gentlemanly basis, and because they actually wanted to? In such an arrangement contracts would be unnecessary, since everything would be done by agreement rather than coercion. It is worthwhile to note that two of the most successful independant labels (Touch and Go and Dischord) operate in exactly this manner. Makes you wonder why all the other indies, who fold or co-opt with big labels in a constant stream, think emulating the big labels is a wise move. There is little precedent for labels like that surviving.

-steve albini

Date: Sun, 19 Jun 1994 19:59:00 -0400
From: Nils <nlsb@subpop.com>
Subject: Re: Albini's post (was: Rose's post)

Responding to Albini--am I on a coffee high or what?

"Twin Tone has done quite well by selling bands in the past, having once had a piece of your band, Soul Asylum, the Jayhawks, Mekons and Babes in Toyland, and it's no secret that Sub Pop has made more money from selling bands than records lately."

I suppose I should leave this to the SP employees on chug who are more directly related with this process, but perhaps "bands being bought" is better terminology than "selling bands." I regularly get calls from people along the lines of, "wow, you guys have made a lot of money off the Whigs, you must be PSYCHED!!" I would hope you all recognize why this comment is ludicrous. For that matter, the routine criticism of Sub Pop for having made money off Nirvana is equally misguided. Speaking of phone calls, our receptionist STILL has to deal with daily calls along the lines of "your golden goose is dead--now what are you gonna do, assholes," and I have more of the aforementioned people saying "too bad about Kurt, but that's cool for you guys" without thinking it may be tasteless at the very least--and these are the people who, in their 'zines, are criticizing everyone (majors, Sub Pop, Beck, anyone in the music industry...) for being more preoccupied with money than music or people. Harrumph. But I digress...

"Bands often think that a long-term contract is some form of security. It is in fact a letter of indenture which may be sold to the highest bidder. Bands ought to remember that their strongest position is one where they have no future obligation to the label."

This is so true. Sign for as few records as possible. If you wanna do another record, but THEY don't want to, then you don't want to either.

"Many labels will not allow a band to be frugal, since this strengthens the band's position. Again, speak with people who've been through it for a few years and you'll get an amazing litany of ridiculous stories. Material Issue had to remix an album because the tambourine (!) wasn't loud enough for the label. They had one of those "total artistic control" contracts you hear about. That means the band can do whatever it wants, and if the label whines enough, the band will

eventually do what the label tells them to, rather than risk having the label be less than enthusiastic about the album."

Man oh man, true true true. I know countless bands on major labels who have had to fight like crazy to be allowed to spend LESS money on their recording, video, etc. They're no philanthropists--it's ultimately YOUR money they're spending; you're just taking out a loan.

As for bands compromising despite the "artistic control" shoo-be-do...this happens all day long with all your favorite "integrity"-laden bands. Bands sign to a label 'cause they're assured they're a "priority," so why would you want to do something which didn't please your A&R guy, thus risking your cherished "priority" position? Remember, while it's entirely possible to make a genuine friend of your A&R guy (or manager, accountant, etc.), it's in their best interest for you to SELL RECORDS, and then to make you feel good about it. If you hear your musician friend saying, "gosh darn it, what's so wrong with making a little money, anyway?" stand him/her in front of a mirror.

"a band should call EVERY SINGLE BAND that has ever been on the label BEFORE they sign, and get a detailed report on how the label treated them."

I know bands who have opened for labelmates and wouldn't even say "hi" because they didn't want to "bug" them. This is ridiculous. Talking to a few bands that are or have been on the label won't do it--you really, really should talk to EVERY band/artist with whom it's remotely possible. Velocity Girl turned off to RCA after David Gedge (Wedding Present) told them about when he called his own label and no one knew who he was. If you can't get their phone number (believe me, your label will be reluctant to give them out), plead your case with some lower-ladder employee and give 'em the

old "unless you have something to hide..." They hate that. Or ask ME--ask anyone. I would hope that no right-minded musician would be pissed about someone asking them a few pointed questions about their experiences.

"Wouldn't it be nice if bands could be on labels operated by their friends, who did things for them on a gentlemanly basis, and because they actually wanted to?"

Shouldn't there be some of those smileys after this? The "they" in the above sentence could be "label" OR "band." Contracts may be faulty, but they're better than NO contracts. And, as the Brains (& Cyndi Lauper) once said, "Money Changes Everything."

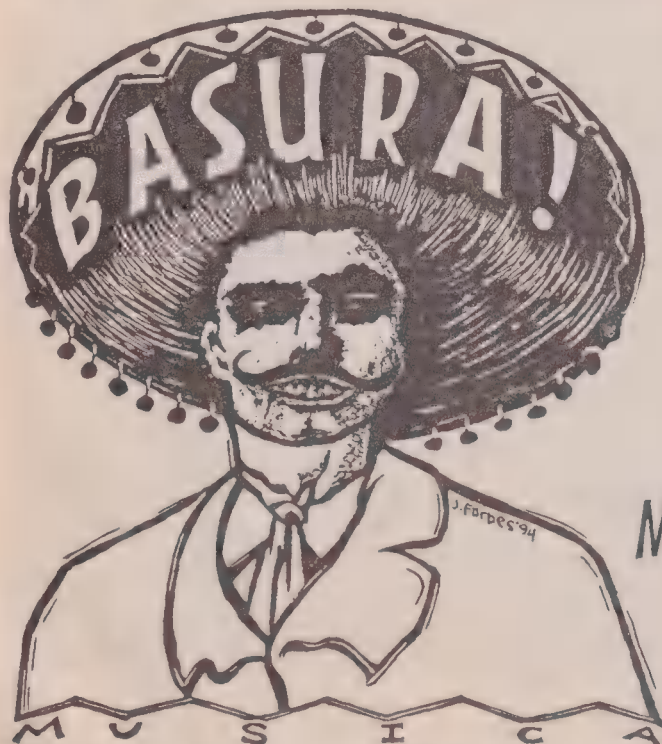
--Nils, at work on Sunday, 'cause I'll do ANYTHING for our bands :-)

From: <roze

Subject: There are exceptions to every rule.

On Sun, 19 Jun 1994, sa-elec wrote:

> Greedy "indie" labels are > signing bands to long-term contracts, then investing just enough money in the record to stir interest in the band. At that point they sandbag and start looking for nibbles from big record companies. If they sell too many of the album, then the big label won't be interested in buying it along with the remainder of the artist's contract. Hardvark is in that situation now, with Cargo having grudgingly sold under 2,000 of their record, but making sure the band gets flown to New York for a \$300 Thai power dinner with Geffen. Having a few of the freakish contracts Dutch East India has been proffering lately (Homestead, Rockville) it's obvious they're working the angle.



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FOR INFORMATION

Gee. That's interesting. HUM is leaving our label (12Inch/Cargo) to go to a major and Cargo not only did almost everything they could to stop this from happening (including refusing to give free CDs to major label weasels) but they also refused to let us discuss selling the HUM CD to the major label. (12Inch has no contracts with our bands, though.) Cargo "grudgingly" sold under 2000 Hardvark records because they haven't toured enough, and not enough people know who they are.

But see, once again, I'm defending an exception, like ■ moron. I now know that Twin/Tone signed us (and every other band they signed, apparently) for the sole purpose of a back catalog and selling ■ off to get enuf money to put out that "God's Favorite Band" record. So you're right, and I don't know why I'm arguing with you. There ■ exceptions to every rule.

But what would you have Hardvark and HUM do? They see all their friends signing to major labels, and they see such sucky bands on MTV, signed to majors, and they are about to call it quits because they can't stand working in the record store anymore, and their girlfriends and parents are sick of supporting them. They have to sign to majors. These bands are in ■ different world - the romantic SST days of working your ass off, driving up and down RT 35 to Minneapolis, 10 hours for \$50 isn't fun for them. I want HUM to sign to ■ major, because it'll make them more happy. I worry they'll be completely fucked over in the long-run, but I guess they wouldn't last another year w/o money and unable to tour, anyway.

> Bands often think that a long-term contract is some form of security. It is in fact a letter of indenture which may be sold to the highest bidder. Bands ought to remember that their strongest position is one where they have no future obligation to the label.

Completely true, and should have been in your Baffler article. Even 3-firm deals (the label HAS to put out 3 records and give you 3 advances) mean nothing when the label decides to drop you. You can't just sue them, can you.

> Bands often cite poor distribution ■ ■ reason to go to a major label. Often this poor distribution is intentional. Fugazi have sold something like 300,000 copies of an album with independant distribution, ■ the notion that "people can't get our records" is ■ spurious one, unless somebody's fucking up. Hell, my band Big Black has sold 100,000 copies of an album with a dirty title, and Shellac has sold 26,000 7" singles. Poor distribution in the indie world is ■ myth.

> Yes, but don't mislead people into thinking that distribution = sales. Your bands and Fugazi are flukes - I doubt that Jawbox would have sold as many records as Fugazi on Dischord. Any record store in the country can order one of our new DIS CDs - but they're not going to, because nobody knows who DIS is in Albuquerque. (Yet.)

> You've been very lucky so far. It has so-far been in Warner's interest to pay you, so you have been paid. The moment they think you're not an asset, you have no leverage to get anything out of them. As for their integrity, you need only check with some of your friends on other WEA labels to get ■ number of horrific stories (Atlantic's treatment of Eleventh Dream Day, Big Dipper and ...

OK, let me clarify: Sire has been very, very good to us. Atlantic is ■ sucky label and has screwed over many of my friends. Most labels (major and indie) suck. 12Inch sucks because you probably can't find our records in most stores; one band is already going to a major because they'll get more exposure and money; the rest aren't famous yet, and I can't seem to get together enough money to pay ■ PR person.

> > But major labels are changing now, and giving their artists a lot more leeway.

> That's their P.R. I have yet to ■ much evidence of it, and I'd bet my house against a stack of Paw cutouts that things won't change.

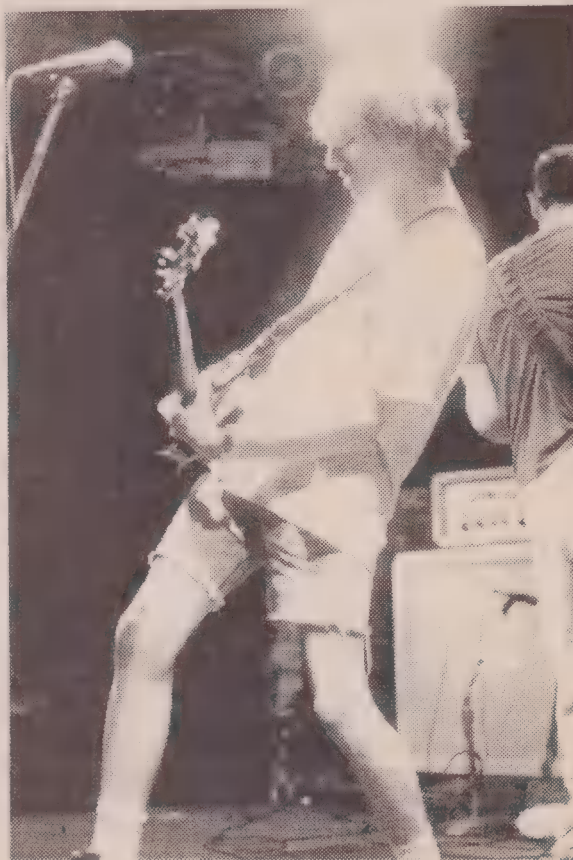
soon.

>

That's *MY* P.R. Our band got to pick the people we worked with, and the place we recorded at. Jawbox got that, too. HUM is going to work with who they choose. Everyone's always getting to do their ■ artwork now. I am pretty sure that the bands on Sire get to work with whoever they choose. I'm sure I can come up with a list of artists who have lots more freedom than you'd expect right now, on major labels.

I feel like I'm defending myself again. All of what Steve said is true; the exceptions ■ bands like Fugazi and Big Black who ■ way better off on indies, because they are huge and great and well-known. Superchunk is doing fine on their record label - but they get tons of press. Jawbox felt like they weren't progressing, and we were trapped with no way out.

I would say that the best way to go about this stuff is to put out your own record. It's cheap and easy. Then you tour, and tour, and tour, and hope that people notice you and figure out ■ way to get people to talk about you or to get the press to write about you. Then you've got it made.



HUM - Topic of discussion



by Matt Sonzala

With all the useless, oft-times untrue propaganda pumped into our minds on a daily basis, it's good to know that someone out there is actually fighting for our rights. The mere fact that a simple plant has been made illegal and unjustly chastised should tell even the average simpleton that something's just not right. Could the powers-that-be not want us to feel good? Or do they not want to clean up the air? Ease the suffering of the dying? Save the trees? Stop the war in the streets? All simple questions with obvious answers. Trouble is, your average smokaholic simpleton concerns himself more with the buzz and is generally more of a hindrance than a help with it comes to promoting the legalization of marijuana. That's where the reasoning of Steven Hager and the staff at High Times comes in. They're making sure the masses not only know what they're smoking, but why and what else it can do. I got to speak with Steven Hager, the editor of High Times, about his magazine's role in the fight to legalize pot.

High Times & The Fight For A Legal High

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVEN HAGER

Q: Talk about the beginning of *High Times*

Hager: Well, I'll tell you, it was founded in 1974 by Thomas King Fourcade, who was one of the original organizers of the 60's counterculture. He started the Yippies with Abbe Hoffman, and funded a lot of his revolutionary activities by smuggling marijuana. In 1978, he was smuggling with his best friend and his friend died in an airplane accident, and Tom blamed himself and committed suicide shortly thereafter. After Tom killed himself, the magazine went through a lot of changes. First it became a pare-Yuppie magazine about feeling good, and then it became kind of a reckless "let's party on drugs" magazine with a lot of cocaine in it, and that quickly ran the magazine into the ground. And by the time I got here in 1986, the magazine was really teetering on the edge of extinction, and what happened was I turned the magazine back into what Tom originally wanted, which was a political activist magazine centered around marijuana. And immediately, the magazine took off again. We've been building circulation ever since.

Q: Yeah, I was gonna mention that because when I was younger, I used to look at *High Times* whenever I could grab one and I noticed that it concentrated a lot more on drugs. As far as you're concerned, are you for legalization across the board or are there certain drugs that you wouldn't want to see legalized?

Hager: Well, I'm not for throwing anybody in jail for doing any drugs at all. I think drugs are a medical health problem, and law enforcement doesn't need to get involved in drugs at all, for any reason. Nothing

that any drug can do to you is as bad as going to jail and what that does to you, so you can't legislate morality from the barrel of a gun. The only thing you can do from the barrel of a gun is create tyranny, and that's what the drug laws have created. So, we've gotta stop arresting 400,000 people a year for marijuana. We've gotta stop throwing people in jail for marijuana, six of whom last year were put in jail for life sentences for marijuana.

Q: Yeah, my man Cold Cris, who you featured in a Mad Flava article a while back, his dad's in jail for life for marijuana.

Hager: Yeah, that's so out of whack. Nothing that marijuana could ever do to you is gonna be as bad as jail, y'know, we don't need to have law enforcement involved. A drug problem should be addressed by educating people. We've been spending \$25 billion a year for 20 years now, they've got the most repressive laws in the history of this country aimed at drug users. They'll take away your car, your bank account, your house, they'll steal everything you've got from you if they catch you with drugs. They'll lock you up for mandatory minimum sentences where the judge has no discretion whatsoever. They only thing worse they can do to you is shoot you on sight, but have they had any impact on drugs in America? No! There's more drugs now than when they started all this bullshit. So that should tell you that their methods aren't working and they're never gonna work.

Q: What do you attribute the widespread ignorance towards the positive uses of hemp for medicine, paper products, and so on?

Hager: Well, you know, they created a huge disinformation campaign.

Q: But that happened in the 1930's year that they started promoting the cultivation of hemp for industry.

Hager: George Washington grew this plant, it was his favorite crop. His advice to the American farmer was, "make the most of hemp seed and sow it everywhere." Every prairie across the west was covered in it. All the soldiers at Valley Forge wore clothes made out of it, there wouldn't be modern civilization without this planet, but you can't find a single reference to the plant in any history book in America. What happened was, in the 1930's, there was a popular revolution in Mexico and one of the leaders was Pancho Villa. Villa's army had a song that they marched into battle with called "La Cucharacha," which means "the roach" in Spanish. It was a song about marijuana. After the Mexican revolution succeeded, American corporations lost millions of dollars because the lands they were holding in Mexico were seized by the government. One of the people who lost the most was William

Nothing that any drug can do to you is as bad as going to jail and what that does to you, so you can't legislate morality from the barrel of a gun.

Randolph Hearst, who owned the largest newspaper chain in America. Over 200 newspapers. Hearst began a campaign of reefer madness, saying that people smoked marijuana and murdered their mother with an ax. He had hundreds of stories about these horrible atrocities committed on marijuana. None of them were true. They were all made up. Yet all of them were printed in his newspapers and believed by the people of America. So this is how it all began. It began with a history of lies, and these lies have continued until today. Every year, they have some kind of bogus story that they present to the American people about why marijuana is so dangerous. Marijuana never killed anybody. The only people dying from marijuana are dying at the hands of our own police forces.

Q: So how can we get the truth out? Environmental effects, medical uses...

Hager: Right. The problem is getting the information out, because if there was a 24 hour long special on national TV that would tell the truth,

marijuana would be legal the next day. The public outcry would be so intense.

Q: But would the people believe it?

Hager: You know, a book came out this year called *Marijuana, The Forbidden Medicine* by Dr. Lester Grinspoon of Harvard University, which documents marijuana as the best possible medicine for glaucoma, epilepsy, asthma, head injuries, uh, you know, just an unbelievable list of diseases and disorders that can be treated by marijuana. Do you think this book has been reviewed by any national newspaper in America?

Q: No?

Hager: No, it has not. But if a book came out that told you that marijuana grows breasts on males, that would be reviewed in The New York Times tomorrow. So that's the problem. The problem isn't that we don't have the information; we have the information. The problem is we can't get the information in the national media.

Q: With the legalization of hemp for industry in the United Kingdom, Spain, and France, won't that help things along...

Hager: Yes, and also Australia, and we expect that within the next year it will also happen in Germany and Canada.

Q: Have you seen any movement towards that here?

Hager: There are 30 companies in America now producing products out of hemp. This is gonna be a huge industry, it's gonna be a billion dollar industry soon. America either gets it, gets with it, and gets involved, or they can sit and watch all the other industrialized nations get a lock on the hemp market. You know, some country will do with hemp what the Japanese did with electronics, and we can either not participate or lead it. It's up to the government at this point.

Q: With American industry's stranglehold on oil, do you think...

Hager: I think that Oil is one of the big corporations that's fighting hemp for a whole variety of reasons. You take hemp seed and press it and get an oil out of it, pour it into a diesel engine, and the car will run just as well as it does on diesel fuel, except it will be non-polluting and diesel fuel is the most polluting fuel in the world. So yeah, the petrochemical companies, they're not interested in seeing cars run on hemp oil. That's obviously another 50 years of polluting the environment and giving ourselves cancer with all these petrochemical products.

Q: On the other hand, who do you feel has had the greatest impact on the promotion of the hemp movement?

Hager: Jack Herer, no question. Author of the book *The Emperor Wears No Clothes*. The book is a #1 bestseller in Germany right now. Jack's getting \$20,000 per month from the German edition of the book alone. Never appeared on a bestseller list in the U.S. I wonder why? Jack spends every penny that he gets from this book on the legalization of marijuana. He is the patron saint of the movement.

Q: When you see videos like "Roll Em Up" from Vanilla Ice that just kind of makes (marijuana use) look ridiculous, do you feel that sort of commercialization hinders the movement or is any press good press?

H: I never saw the video, never heard the song. I know a lot of people at the office get down on it, but hey, anybody wants to promote legalization, more power to 'em. I'm not going to say anything bad about that.

Q: What about, as far as hip hop goes, the way that scenes of smoking blunts always featured side by side scenes of gangster violence?

H: I feel that marijuana is a non-violent sub-culture, but unfortunately,



Hash Bash, University of Michigan 1993

our inner cities are so violent and it's very foreign to most marijuana smokers to have to live at that level of fear and intimidation from violence. I just hope that ■■■ can legalize drugs because I think that's the main cause of a lot of the violence. Drug deals are one of the main causes of violence in the inner cities and if ■■■ could get rid of just that aspect, maybe all these kids would not feel compelled to carry all those weapons.

Q: Well, if drugs ■■■ legalized and the government had a hold on it, just like they do alcohol and tobacco, how do you feel that would affect it?

H: I don't want the government to have a hold on this ■■■ all. I wouldn't like to see marijuana treated like alcohol. Cuz I turn on the TV and every major sporting event has commercials targeting young minds, sucking them into ■■ lifelong addiction to alcohol. So I would not like to ■■■ that happen to marijuana, I would like to ■■■ it end with alcohol. I think that [marijuana] should not be allowed to be promoted and advertised.

Q: So would you say you're more for decriminalization?

H: I think that all plants should be freely available. So you should be able to buy the seeds and cultivate yourself any plant in the world, and I think it's immoral for the U.S. government to conduct a campaign of extermination against ■■ plant species. I don't see any difference in their war of extermination on marijuana than trying to exterminate any other form of life. It's wrong. But as far as the distribution, refinement, and sale, I think the government can regulate those things, but they can't regulate your personal use or your ability to cultivate any plant in the world.

Q: How do you feel when groups like D.A.R.E. lump marijuana in with the synthetic drugs like heroin and cocaine?

H: Well, the biggest problem with D.A.R.E. is, it's a propaganda campaign aimed at convincing children that marijuana is bad, and they try to get the children to narc on their parents. It's ■■ Big Brother type program that divides American families through the Drug War. There's 20-30 million people using marijuana on a regular basis in America. We sent the armed forces and the police against our own people, now we want to send our own children against our own people. It's a disgusting, reprehensible program.

Q: How is it possible to build a world-renowned magazine around an illegal substance?

H: Well, thank God for the Bill Of Rights, otherwise we wouldn't have this magazine. We're allowed to publish any information we choose and we've been the only accurate source about marijuana for 20 years.

Q: Have there been any repercussions?

H: Oh, the government wishes we'd go away, they've tried to put us out of business three times and they've failed miserably each time, and they usually just end up getting us more publicity every time they go after us. So now they just leave us alone.

Q: How far do you think America is from legalization?

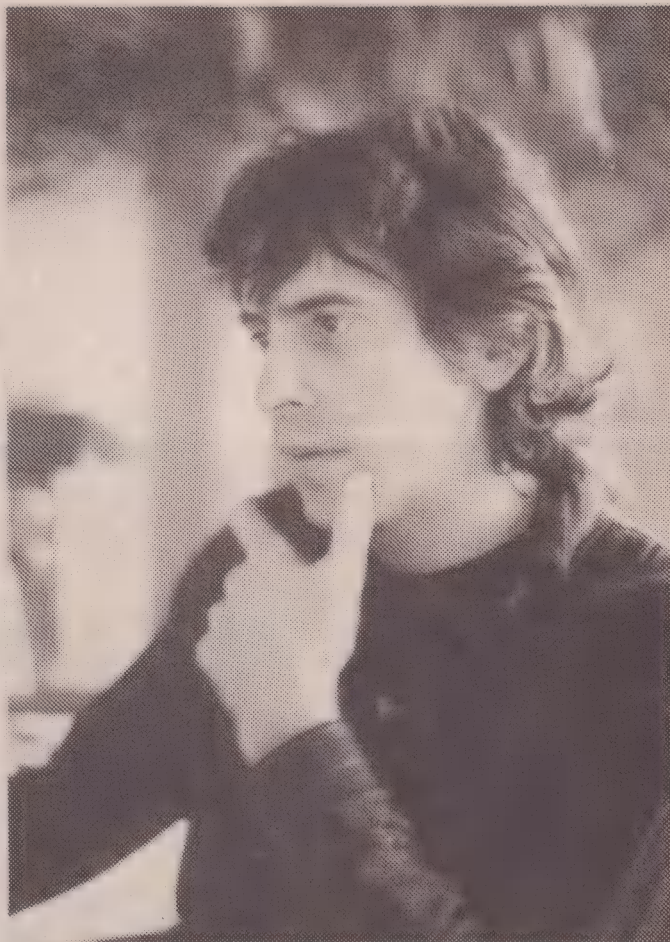
H: That depends on what the national media do in the next few years with this issue. We just saw the first cable TV show on hemp on TBS last week. If the national media want to tell the truth finally to the American people about hemp, then we're gonna ■■■ legal marijuana very soon.

Q: Does Bill Clinton give you any hope?

H: Not ■■ all. He's been extremely bad on this issue.

Q: All right, how do you want to wrap this up?

H: Well, I think there are two really crucial issues here. First, ■■■ have several million people who desperately need marijuana as



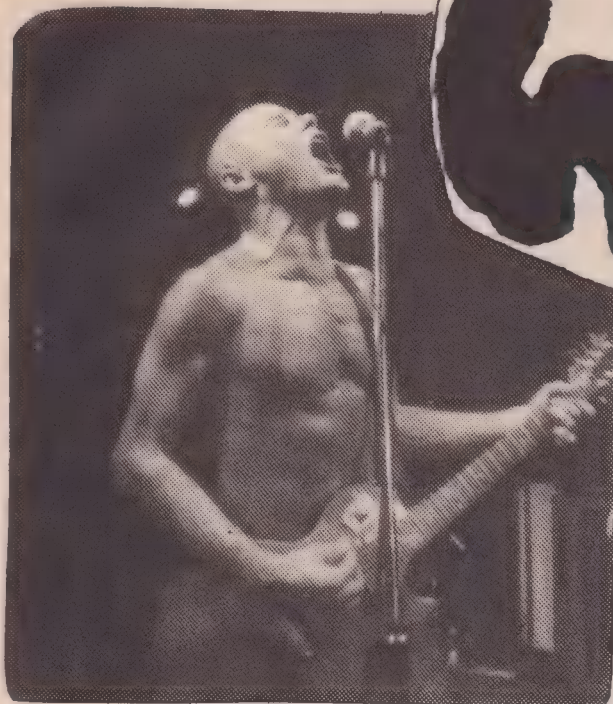
**STEVEN
HAGER**

Photo by
Malcolm
MacKinnon

medicine. People with AIDS, cancer, glaucoma, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, paraplegics, people with head injuries... There are people going blind in America who wouldn't lose their sight if they had access to marijuana.

The second thing is, we've got like 50-60,000 people locked up in cages for marijuana, and we're arresting 500,000 people a year. This is ■■■ incredible strain on our criminal justice system and our taxpayers are paying for all of this. It's a waste... This war has been going on for 20 years and there ■■■ more people smoking marijuana now than when they started. It's time for the U.S. government to realize that they cannot stop us from doing what we want to do. The Constitution is supposed to protect the pursuit of happiness. This is our happiness and we're not going to give it up.

Pete Stahl, by Shawn Scallen
Wool, photo by Chris Stevenson



WOOL

by Jim Testa

There weren't many bands that played with more heart or more conviction than **Scream**, one of the hardest-working, impassioned hardcore bands to **come** out of D.C.. They struggled for close to a decade - Pete and Franz Stahl, their bassist Skeeter, and a succession of drummers - never quite finding the success they deserved, always in the shadow of their more-famous D.C. peers **Minor Threat**. Success finally came, ironically enough, after **Scream** disintegrated in the middle of a tour, three thousand miles from home. Their drummer at the time decided to stay on the West Coast and moved to Seattle to join a band there that needed a drummer. You might have heard of them... **Nirvana**. When Pete and Franz decided to stay in Los Angeles and start a **new** band called **Wool**, they quickly became a hot property, and signed to



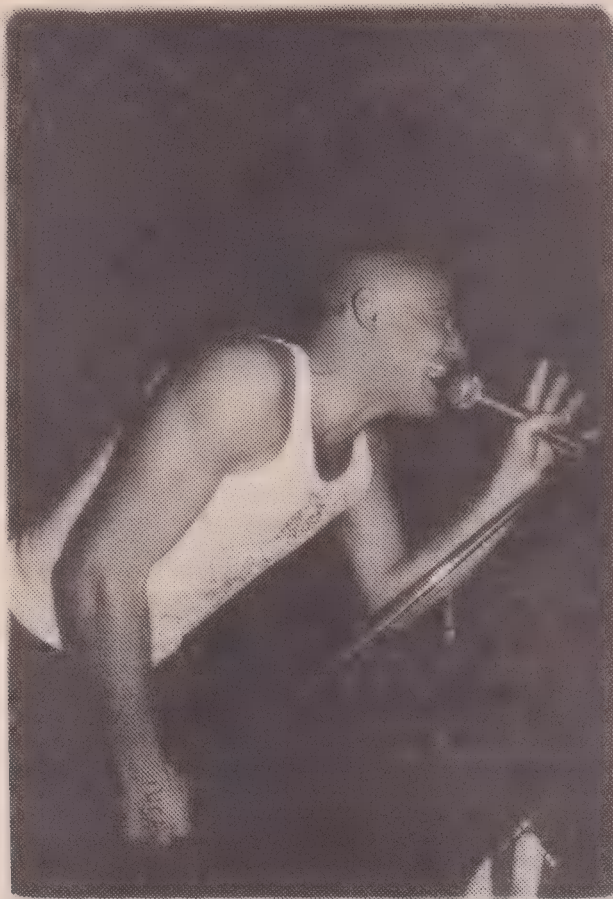


Photo by Shawn Scallen

London Records after recording only two limited-edition singles.

I first met Pete and Franz when Scream came to New York and played the old W. 45th Street Peppermint Lounge's Sunday hardcore matinee back in 1985 or so. In those days, being in a hardcore band made you about as popular as an insurance salesman, at least within the music industry. Hardly anyone came to the show, so the three of us sat in the dingy backstage dressing room and talked for hours that day.

Pete and I kept in touch sporadically through the years and met again when, still unsigned, Wool came to New York for several New Music Seminar shows in 1993. Pete hadn't changed a bit - warm, humble, self-effacing, funny, and still committed to the ideals that made Scream one of the most important bands to emerge from the D.C./Dischord hardcore scene. Soon after that, the band signed to London Records and recently, when Pete and Wool bassist Al Bloch came to New York to promote the band's debut album, *Box Set*, I had the opportunity to talk with them over a dish of overpriced tortellini and uncooked vegetables. The

food wasn't very good, but the conversation was excellent. - Jim Testa

Q: You spent ten years breaking your back in this great band called Scream and basically nobody ever noticed you outside of the hardcore scene. What was it like when you started Wool and within a few months had all these major labels knocking your door down? It must have felt a little weird.

Pete: It wasn't exactly like that. We got together after we had all hooked up in different ways, started practicing. And this friend of us, who's in the band Kyuss, was doing sound effects for the movies in this studio called Sonar. So he said, I think I can record you guys, but we have to do it the sly. So we'd sneak in there late at night, in between when they were doing sound effects for *Freejack*, and did a tape there. Then Buzz from the Melvins had wanted to start a label and asked us if we wanted to do a single with him. So the first single came out on his label, which was called Fuck You Records. We did that, and then those guys Tom Roprock and Rob Shnop, approached us at a gig or something and wanted to start their own label. They were these studio gearhead kind of guys, they worked in a studio, and they asked us...

Al: Basically, they wanted to put out singles by some bands they liked and get their name around. That's all there was to it.

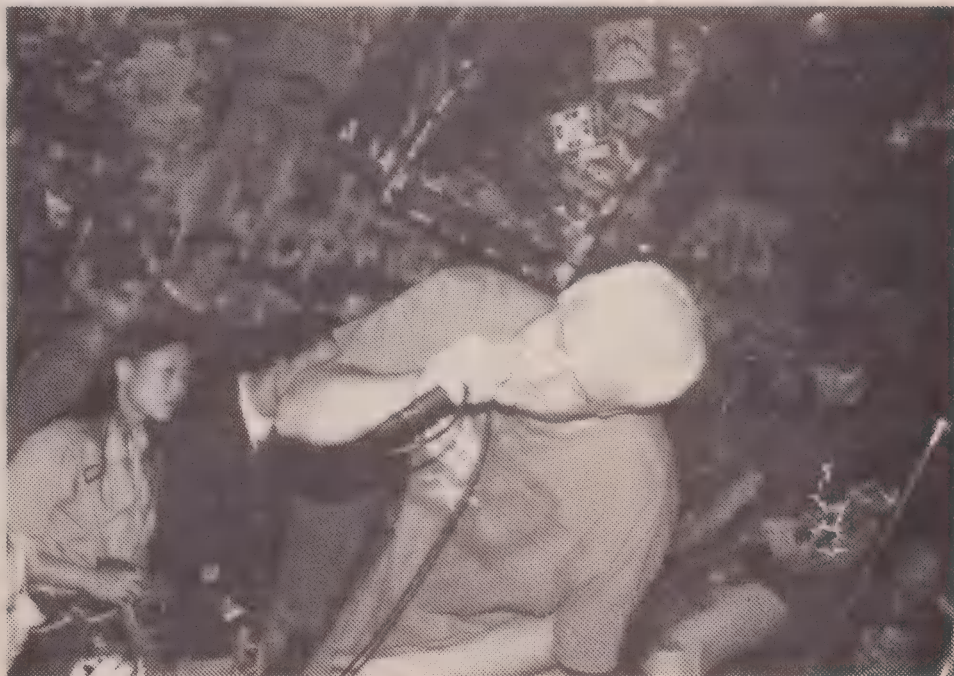
Pete: So we recorded in this little studio out in the valley. It seemed like it was in the middle of where all these speed dealers... like it was a bathtub crank shop or something. We did a tape there and our single with them....

Al: Then we hit the road.

Pete: Yeah, then we started touring...

Al: It wasn't like the labels were there from day one.

Q: I remember last year (1993) when you came to New York for the New Music Seminar. All you had were those two 7 inches out and yet you got like three gigs at the Seminar and you had all these label guys checking you out, something got started somewhere.



Pete: A lot of that was just coincidence. The girl who was booking the Academy used to book the 9:30 Club in D.C. and knew [redacted] from *Scream*, but, yeah, you're right, right about then was when we started noticing that there were a lot of labels checking us out.

Q: Meanwhile, your old drummer [Dave Grohl] had this record out [*Nevermind*] that [redacted] kinda doing okay [7 million copies sold in the U.S.]...

Pete: Yeah, his record did really well. And him being [redacted] it probably had something to do with the fact that [redacted] did [redacted] well. He has a special gift and he's a really cool guy. I'm sure he added a lot to that record. I was there when they [redacted] making that record, actually. There's a lot of Dave [redacted] that record.

Q: So go on with what happened to Wool.

Pete: It definitely [redacted] a big change going from D.C. to Los Angeles. In D.C., labels just totally ignored bands. They didn't want anything to do with any of us hardcore bands at all. Even some of the bands that [redacted] looked up, bands like the Razz and other [redacted] wave bands who seemed like they could have made it, [redacted] ignored. The only D.C. band that really made [redacted] was the Urban Verbs, they did [redacted] record for Warner Brothers. But other than that, most of the labels would sign metal or hard rock bands from Baltimore, they'd just stay away from D.C. bands. It's not like none of us wanted major label attention, it [redacted] just that the scene [redacted] pretty much ignored.

But going to L.A. [redacted] a big difference. All the A&R people, all the people from the record business, go out every night and go checking out bands. And it's easy to get noticed if you have [redacted] good band. We eventually signed with London but I always felt it [redacted] the band itself that got us signed, not just the fact that punk rock all of sudden starting becoming the [redacted] mainstream.

Q: D.C. is such [redacted] small town when it comes to the music scene.

There's really only one label, Dischord, and one club, the 9:30 Club, and it always seemed to me like everybody there knew each other. It must have been really weird moving to L.A., which is such a huge scene, and not knowing anybody there. Was it hard getting gigs there when you started?

Pete: We didn't try and get gigs in the most obvious places in L.A. The first place [redacted] played [redacted] Jabberjaw's, which is this coffee shop/art gallery. A lot of bands [redacted] playing there and it was more the kind of vibe, atmosphere that [redacted] were into. We played there, we played some parties, we played out in the desert. We played Al's Bar.

Al: The bands [redacted] were playing with then were really a small scene themselves. It wasn't like we tried to compete at all the big Sunset Strip clubs. We didn't really go out looking to get signed.

Pete: Yeah, anyone can play Raji's, so we'd play Raji's.

Al: We [redacted] really just trying to do it ourselves.

Pete: One thing that really helped us is that Al had lived there for [redacted] years and he knew a lot of people. From being in Concrete Blonde and working at Aaron's Records, which is [redacted] real central location for the music scene there, he knew a lot of people, a lot of the club owners. So it made it [redacted] lot easier for us. And he sold drugs too, which helped [redacted] a lot. (laughing) And that escort service he ran too helped us, especially with the people in the record business (laughing harder).

Q: I'm surprised you didn't sign with Geffen then.

(laughter)

Q: Okay, [redacted] the escort service is [redacted] joke. So what did you do out there to support yourselves until the band got signed?

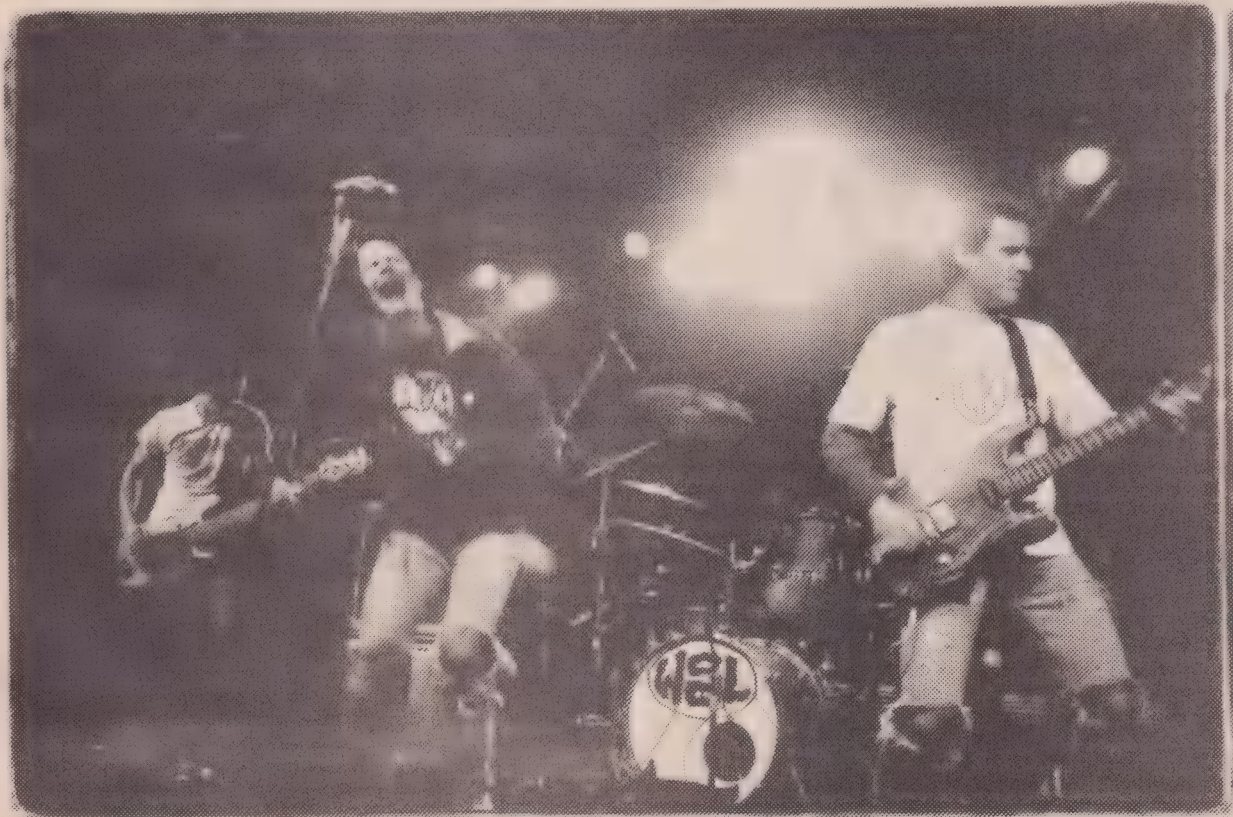


Photo by Shawn Scallen

Pete: For ■ long time, actually, my little sister ■■ basically supporting us. It took me forever to find ■ job. As any musician can tell you, if you're in ■ band for ■ while you get to travel a lot and stuff but you don't build up much of a resume. People always wonder, what did you do between 1986 and 1992? And I'd just say, well, I had this band... I must have put in 20 applications before I finally found job. I delivered the L.A. Weekly for a while, I did some odd job construction work at people's houses, whatever I could find. And then finally I got ■ job at ■ print shop, driving for them. My brother got a job ■ a car dealership.

Al: Pretty glamorous.

Q: Did you ever reach the point where your biological clock started ticking and you started thinking, God, I'm twenty-whatever, I either have to get this band thing working or start thinking about getting a real job?

Pete: There are moments like that late at night, when you're picking yourself up off the bathroom floor, cleaning the puke off the toilet for the 2000th time. But really, I've always been happy doing what I'm doing, and I've done just about everything I ever wanted to do, except maybe go to some parts of the world I haven't been to yet. But, you know, I started ■ band, made records, toured around, I've been able to express myself through my music. It's a pretty good life. I can't complain. I'd like to be able to help people out more than I do. That's the only thing in my life I feel like is missing. I used to do a lot more stuff with the community back in D.C. In L.A., it's a lot harder to get involved, so I haven't really done that. But other than that, I've been pretty happy.

Q: How about the songs you're writing now? Scream always had a pretty upfront political agenda. The songs you're writing now seem a lot more personal.

Pete: That's one thing about being in a band so long. I still feel the same way I did when I started, I really haven't had a chance to sit back and reflect on it. My life has always been going full-steam ahead and whatever ■■ out, musically or lyrically, is just the way I feel. I maybe have found different ways to say it. I really like to express important issues through stories and through the lyrics, not beat people over the head with it. It's ■ real challenge to me, that I really like to rise to, to try and write a good song that really says something important to, and that might be important to someone else. It makes ■ all worthwhile when you're able to do that.

Q: That first EP you did for London seemed like you were going off in ■ weird metal direction.

Pete: I can ■■ that. With ■■ EP, you get five or six songs.... We definitely wanted to put the harder songs on that record, because live, we're usually a heavy band. In the studio, we get crazy, things get watered down a little bit. We've never been able to, even in Scream, get the intensity of the live show down on a record. Live, every night is different, it's real, it's real life. In a studio, it's drawn out over ■ few days and sometimes ■ doesn't come all together.

Al: The slower songs on our new album, we had all those already when ■■ did the EP, we just didn't have room to put them on. We just wanted to make the EP a more slammin' record.

Pete: We always try to be as uncool ■ possible too. (laughs)

Al: We usually don't have to try very hard, either.

Pete: At the time that EP came out, alternative music w■ starting to be the big thing, so ■■ decided to try and sound like Motley Crue.

Q: The one song that I liked from the EP w■ "Medication."

Pete: My brother wrote that song. It's ■ good song. And you know,

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that's not bad. With all the records you get, if you remember that one song, that's pretty good. I used to be records for just one song.

Q: Do you ever think about who you're writing songs for? I mean, the audience today is so fragmented.... metal, alternative, whatever... And now that you're on a major, there is some pressure to sell at least a certain number of records if you want to keep on making more. Does any of that ever run through your head?

Pete: No, man. If we don't sell a lot of records and got dropped, we'd just go someplace else, it wouldn't stop us from making music. No, it doesn't come into play at all.

Al: That attitude comes from having a sense of ourselves as a band. What we're about, what we want to do. So if someone didn't want us to put records out on their label, we'd find somewhere else or do it ourselves.

Q: Do you have a sense of who your audience is? Because it isn't the same bunch of moshing 16 year olds that you used to play for all the time in *Scream*.

Pete: No, I don't think I do. I write music like I was talking to my friends, so maybe I'm writing for my friends. I don't know.

Q: Have you been involved with the marketing of the band at all? With the people at the label, I mean.

Pete: Oh yeah, sure. We don't get to go to a lot of the meetings but we always put our two cents in. They don't always do what we think but they've been pretty receptive about at least listening to what we have to say about how the band is sold. Most of the people [at London] seem to understand what we're about.

Q: Do you ever get sick of having your kid brother around?

Pete: Sure. That's why we're out here (in NY) and he's back there

Q: No, seriously, you've been in bands together since you were kids, what's it like being that close all the time?

Pete: It's fun. Sharing my life with my brother is fun. I'm not a very good guitar player but I like playing it. But he's really good, and he really knows how to write songs and riffs and stuff. And I like writing lyrics and putting lyrics to good music, so I think it works out pretty good.

Q: Speaking of songwriting, the new album contains several very soft ballads and the first time I ever saw you live, you closed your set with one. I thought that was very cool, since it seemed to fly in the face of every "rule" for how to play a big rock and roll show. Is that something you do all the time?

Pete: No, not really. We change the set a lot. If you listen to the new record, we have a lot of different kinds of music we like. We just get together in our basement - well, we don't have a basement anymore. I don't think there are any basements in Los Angeles, at least that I've been able to find. But when we get together to rehearse, we jam on a lot of different things, a lot of weird stuff. And the songs are all pretty different. So when you make up a set list, you ask, how are we gonna make this work? We've got all these songs, what are we gonna do with them? If you buy the vinyl of our new album, it comes with a 7 inch EP with three extra songs, and they're fast and heavy. If we had put those on the album and had taken some of the slower ones off, it would have made the album quite different. We just tried to take the best of all the songs we had and put them together as a representation of us, of the band. You do the same thing when you make up a set list for a show, you try to do a little bit of everything.

Q: It makes life harder when people can't just stick a label on you, though, doesn't it?

Pete: Oh yeah, definitely. I've been having people tell me that my whole life, like, *Scream* always played too much different stuff. It's the same sort of thing. But we've always been about challenging people, their ideas about music and themselves. It's cool to hear someone say that it was gutsy thing to do, or it was different or whatever. Anyone can go out there and play songs the same tempo all the way through the set. Music's supposed to move people, and that's what we try to do. And the best way to do that is through dynamics - lifting people up and bringing them down, taking them to places away from their everyday. Give them something special.

That's one of the things that bums me out about what's happening in music today. Like this Woodstock thing they did. That seemed like a pretty safe thing to me, all the kinds of music. Not like the first Woodstock, which was probably a kinda dangerous thing to do, you know? Nobody knew what to expect and everybody was just like, yeah, man, let's go and check it out. That's what I always loved about the punk scene. I was scared to death the first time I saw the Bad Brains play. I wanted to see more and feel that again. A lot of kids were feeling that, a lot of them for the first time. You forget that feeling when you see bands a lot, when you're a journalist or you've been playing in bands for a long time. For a lot of kids, it's their first time, and when you're playing for them, you can really do something, really say something. You can do that with music, and it's a really cool thing to do. Sometimes I'll meet people and they'll say, man, I saw you in *Scream* such and such years ago and you guys said this thing, and I really went home and thought about it. That's fucking cool when you have someone who tells you that, that you made them think about something.



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Will Success Spoil The Figgs?

by Suzanne Thompson

Being the Figgs' road manager must be like being the nanny for a bunch of lovable but hyperactive kids. They're all really nice guys, but it's almost impossible to get them to sit still for more than ten minutes **■** a stretch. I spent about twenty-nine hours with them on their recent swing through Massachusetts, watching two manic sets at the Bay State Hotel in Northampton and T.T. the Bear's Place in Cambridge, riding with them from Northampton to Boston, and interviewing them in the Figgmobile while their friends pounded on the windows and they wore me out.

Collectively, the Figgs **■** a pop quartet from Saratoga Springs, NY, who signed with Imago at the beginning of the year. Individually, they are Mike Gent (22), guitar and vocals; Guy Lyons (23), guitar; Pete Donnelly (21), bass and vocals; and Pete Hayes (25), drums. Their debut CD, *Low-Fi at Society High*, came out in June and is working its way up the college charts. They've toured with the Cranberries, the Knack, and the Chainsaw Kittens and they've just completed a video for their new single, "Favorite Shirt." It might seem like they've come out of nowhere, but these guys have been around for seven years. They started in 1987 as the Sonic Undertones, with Mike **■** guitar and vocals, Pete Donnelly on bass, and Guy on drums. Guy left in 1989 to join the army and Mike and Pete stole Skidmore student Pete Hayes from **■** band called Cement Bunny to replace him. Guy returned in 1992 and, finding his old

job taken, switched to guitar. Somewhere along the line the Sonic Undertones almost got a record deal and changed their **■** to the Figgs. Mike explains: "This guy wanted us to change our name. We were really hurting for a new name, so **■** just sitting around **■** day and I said, 'What about the Figgs?' We **■** desperate. **■** It has been reported that they chose the name because "figg" means "fuck" in German; is this true? Mike says, "Well, kind of. Somebody told me that after we had decided to change our name, but I don't think it really means 'fuck' in German. But it's a good thing to tell people." Given Pete Donnelly's description of their early sound ("We used to play soul and Little Richard and Sam Cooke and rockabilly when Guy **■** our drummer"), it seems that they dropped the name that conjures up images of Sonic Youth and the Undertones just as their music **■** starting to move in that direction.

I first became acquainted with the Figgs when they played in Boston last New Year's Eve and Pete Hayes gave me a copy of their self-produced tape, *Ready Steady Stoned*. Four of the songs on this tape **■** rerecorded for *Low-Fi at Society High* and the new versions are, well, poppier and sound, well, prettier-up. According to Pete D, "That's because *Ready Steady Stoned* was made in two days in my parents' attic on a cheap 8-track by **■** and **■** never did anything twice."

But I like the ragged quality of the original versions - they're



The Figgs, just figging around... All photos by Suzanne Thompson

faster and punker. Mike says, "I just think [the new versions] were rehearsed a bit more. A lot of those songs on *Ready Steady Stoned* were written just around the time that we recorded it and Guy had just joined the band [again], so they were really like raw ideas of what the songs actually came to be. Somebody else was saying that to me, that 'Favorite Shirt' on *Ready Steady Stoned* was a lot faster. It's really sloppy. Like Pete said, it was recorded in two days and we really hadn't rehearsed a lot of those songs." Pete D: "We just wanted to throw the stuff down so we could listen to it." Pete H: "Our playing had gotten a lot better by the time we recorded the record, too." Pete D: "Our own standard of playing was a lot higher when we got a real record. We want like, we want to do it right. Nobody ever came in and said, 'It's not good enough.' So any prettying done by us and nobody else."

The "prettying" included adding piano, clavinet, mellotron, slide guitar, Farfisa, and Yoo-Hoo bottles to the mix, but there's still plenty of distortion on the record and nice, odd touches like the sound of a hand sliding down a guitar neck and someone sniffing at the end of a song.

The comparison that comes up most often in descriptions of the Figgs' sound is early-'80s pop, and their official bio compares them to the "Angry Young Men" of the English post-punk scene: Elvis Costello, Graham Parker, Paul Weller, the Clash, and Joe Jackson. This pisses them off. Pete D says, "I think that gets a little annoying, this British angle they've given us. The frustration of Americans is a lot different from the frustration of people from England and I don't think that the content of our songs has anything to do with a lot of the content of English pop songs. I grew up listening to Sabbath, Black Flag, Husker Du, the Replacements, the Beach Boys, Iron Maiden. But we all listen to a lot of music and I'd say that the main part of our influences is not English pop, but we happen to sound like it."

But what about the Elvis Costello comparisons? It's not that big a leap from Costello's "Don't say a word/Don't say anything/Don't say a word/I'm not even listening" to Gent's "Don't tell me to shut my mouth/I could yell for hours/Oh, for crying out loud/You're as cold as my showers." "Yeah," Pete concedes, "a lot of [Costello's] songs are about women, so I guess I'm wrong."

Which brings us to the charges of misogyny. The Figgs have been taken to task (most recently in *Spin*) for their attitude toward women. I wanted to ask Mike about this, but he bailed out of the interview before I got a chance, so Pete D answered. "Most of the people we deal with intimately and emotionally are women, because we happen to be men, so [the people we] happen to be most upset about a lot are women. So it can be matter-of-fact without being general, you know what I mean? Also, a lot of times when we've been accused of those things we might happen to be talking about men. I'm speaking for myself, I guess, but I think a lot of angst is directed toward the whole thing between men and women. Pissed off at women? Sure. I've been pissed off at women plenty of times. But a lot of times when I write songs I just totally make it up. But I believe that whatever someone experiences out of the song is what it means to them, you know, 'cause what it means to me they probably won't get. So if they get it to be sexist, then I guess that's their problem, not mine."

And what about "Waltz for Bob" which has been interpreted as being about Elvis Costello-style sexual politics? Pete D explains, "[Bob is] a beautiful cat and anyone who denounces our love for her is a complete ass-wipe. The reason that the song is so great is because there's a duality to it, meaning that it makes perfect sense as a woman. And a lot of

times I feel like my relationships with cats are as powerful as with humans. Your love is forsaken a lot with cats, like you love them so much and sometimes they're just so mean and then



Mike Gent

they're so sweet, you know? It's just like that in love. Cats are very humanlike, because you develop relationships and sometimes they're troubled."

So how did four guys from a small town in upstate New York land a deal with Imago? Pete D says, "A good manager. We made a demo deal for Columbia about a year ago, which means that they just give you x dollars and you go make a demo and then they have the option of signing you and they didn't, thank God, so we just shopped the tape. And Brad happened to know one of the A&R guys at Imago and they got us the deal." Pete H continues: "We got a showcase audition and the A&R guy liked it and he had us stay overnight and play for the president and he was really into it. They came to see us at Bogie's in Albany, Halloween and into the third song the president was really ecstatic. It's a seven-record deal, with the first two guaranteed. They can't drop us, or if they drop us they've got to give us the budget for the next one." Pete D: "But they're not likely to drop us. They really like the record." The deal also allows them to put out two singles per year on any independent label and Mike says, "So now there's independent labels wanting to do shit with us and we're able to do that." In fact, they've got a single out now on March Records ("Go Before" b/w "Let's Get Arrested") and another due out soon.

To the snot-nosed kids who fill the Internet with their

rantings, signing with ■ major label is the ultimate sellout. How do the Figgs see it? Well, they all got to quit their day jobs. Pete D says, "We do something that ■ like to do and now we do it a lot more. We didn't sell anything. Yeah, there's ■ drawback. You lose certain qualities of freedom but, hopefully, you're gonna turn ■ lot ■ people on and that's fine with me. I mean, I'd ■ lying if I said I wasn't in it to make ■ living. I don't want to bust my ■ doing some shit for somebody else; I want to do all the shit for myself. And this is the only way to do it, really, unless you're like Fugazi and you're totally hardcore in the way you approach your own business, which none of us are together enough to do. We needed that push to get us over the slump, which required having someone go, 'Okay, here's some dollars\$go make a record.' The only problem with it is you have to deal with ■ whole bunch more weenies in your life. But that's okay."

Pete H adds, "Selling out is something that I think you've got to decide for yourself. When you stop doing things that you love, that you want to do, then you know that you sold out." But Mike sums it up best: "You get a free dinner every now and then. It's pretty cool." In addition to signing with Imago, the Figgs also recently signed with the hotshot booking agency CAA (Creative Artists Agency). What does this mean? Pete D: "Well, we've already got ■ tour and I've seen the contracts and we'll get treated much better than ■ ever have before." Pete H: "And now if ■ need dates coming back from ■ long-distance gig - know, ■ want to work our way back - can get them really easily." That's club dates, not women.

It seems that the Figgs ■ on the road all the time now; how do they like the nomadic life? Pete D: "We're tired. It's great because it's just more and more experience." Mike: "For me it's pretty much fucking [heavy sigh] just drive and do all this shit and it's just like waiting to play for 40 minutes." Pete H: "Twenty-three hours and 20 minutes of boredom for 40 minutes of sheer excitement." Mike: "And if the show goes good then it really sucks because that's supposed to be the time when we're having the most fun." Pete D: "You meant to say if the show goes bad." Mike: "h, yeah." Pete H: "We hate good shows. We're gonna suck tonight."

With all this travelling, they must have some amusing stories to tell. Pete H says, "I saw that guy masturbating in Texas. The first thing I do when ■ get into Texas is look out the window in the truck and ■ car drives by. There's a guy, he's got his penis in his hand and ■ smile on his face. I'm like, so this is Texas, huh?" Mike: "Pete's jumping around the van going, 'That guy was jerking off! That guy was jerking off!'" Pete H: "And then I looked over to the right and there was this big ostrich farm. It just seemed kinda surreal." And then there was the beer fight they had with the audience when they opened for the Knack in Boston. The fight ■ started by ■ of Pete's Cement Bunny bandmates who is now in the Boston band Kruller and it left the stage and some of the Knack's equipment covered with beer. The Knack were not amused. And then...

Okay, enough stories. What about the video? When we spoke, they had just gotten the final edit of the video for "Favorite Shirt." But wait ■ minutepweren't they supposed to be making ■ video for "Wasted Pretty?" They did, but it ■ scrapped, partly because Imago decided to release "Favorite Shirt" instead and partly because they didn't like the way it turned out. Pete H says, "It ■ kind of ■ high budget thing and there ■ a really big crew. I think that we felt sort of isolated, not really part of it." This was not the case with second video. Mike says, "I think the difference between the two videos, which made this ■ much better, is that with the

first one, he pitched us the idea and we kind of liked it. After that we couldn't put our two cents in. So for this one, when we met the director everybody threw out their ideas and kind of agreed on everything. And we were like, let's take two days and just film a bunch of shit." Pete D adds, "It was much more impromptu instead of ■ stupid-ass organized thing where you have to control what goes on to the point where there's nothing creative happening." The new video was shot in their basement and at various hotspots around Saratoga and it's pretty funny. Perhaps it will have turned up on *120 Minutes* by the time you read this.

What else does the immediate future hold for the Figgs? Mike says, "We're gonna go home tonight, take ■ couple days off, move, tour with Weezer until mid-September, and then hop onto another tour, which is yet unknown. And then we're gonna record the second record soon. We've got another single coming out on ■ independent label called the Matt label, which is out of North Carolina, and it's two songs. 'Miss Velvet' is the A side, or one of the sides, and 'Powder King' is the other side." Pete D adds, "The Imago single should be out now. It's ■ CD-5. I think it's 'Favorite Shirt,' 'Chevy Nova,' and three unreleased tracks." (It is out, and the three unreleased tracks are new versions of "Lynette" and "Punch" from *Ready Steady Stoned* and a cover of the Kinks' "Village Green.")

If activity level has anything to do with success, these guys should be huge soon. Will success spoil the Figgs? I hope not. Pete Hayes and I were standing in a very slow line at Dunkin' Donuts on New Year's Day talking about their show the previous night and he mentioned that he'd seen Gigolo Aunt Dave Gibbs in the audience. I said I'd seen him, too, and joked that the Gigolo Aunts ■ becoming ■ big that Dave probably wouldn't talk to ■ much longer. Pete looked at me and said, "The Figgs will always talk to you." I hope so.



Greg Lyons

DEADGUY

by Mat Gard

When I was asked to write something about Deadguy, I wasn't really sure what to say. It's easy to let people speak for themselves, but writing about other people - and getting across what they want to say correctly - is a much more difficult matter. So one night, when I ran into a few members of the band on the way to work one night - Dave, Crispy and Tim were eating at a local greasy spoon - I told them what I was going to do.

"You should write about what assholes we are," Dave forwards, half joking, with one eyebrow cocked.

"No, wait, you should write about how we're five guys who look all alike, except for me," says Crispy.

Seriously, though, how do you talk about Deadguy? You could call them a punk band. Or perhaps you could call them a hardcore band. But these days, hardcore describes anyone from Orange 9MM to 108, and punk can mean anything from Drop Dead to Green Day. The words don't describe shit.

Deadguy arose from the ashes of several prominent NJ hardcore bands (which ones are irrelevant since the band is not trying to surf off the past, and Deadguy sounds a lot different from all earlier efforts anyway.) I've seen most of Deadguy's shows so I guess I have a good perspective on what they're trying to do. They started out with Tim Singer on vocals, Dave Rosenberg on drums, Crispy on bass, and Dan Hornacker on guitar. They played a two-song set of covers with this lineup at an outdoor barbecue last



DEADGUY

Photo by Tom Singer

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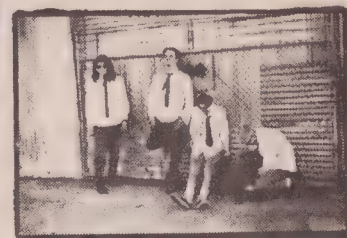
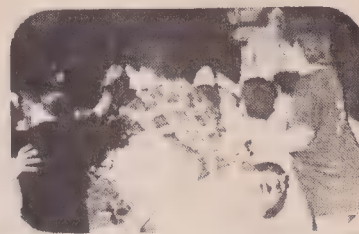
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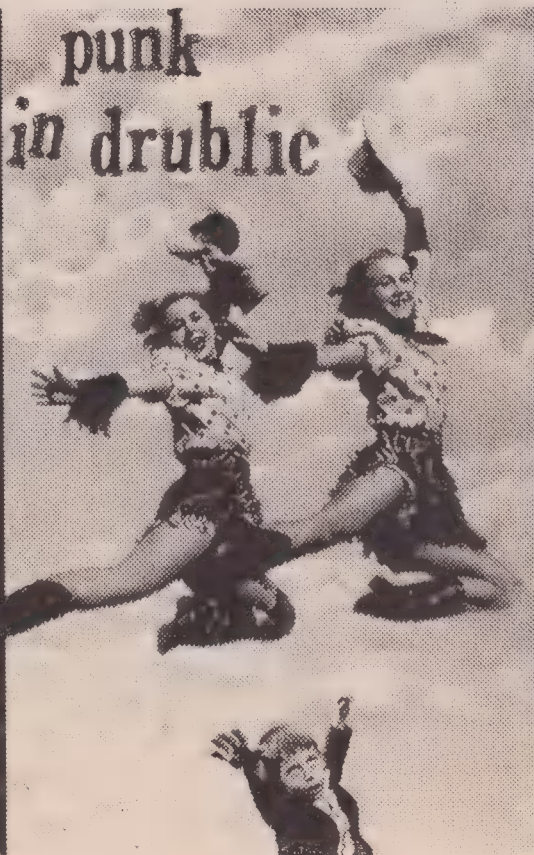
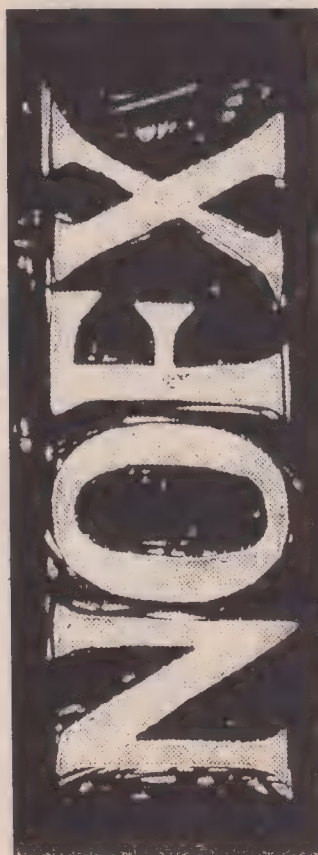
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summer. The cops showed up during the first song. Dan left the band ~~after~~ after, and Crispy moved to guitar. Tim Noman joined in on bass. They played quite a few shows with this lineup. A few months later, Keith Huckins entered on second guitar, and the lineup of Deadguy finally stabilized.

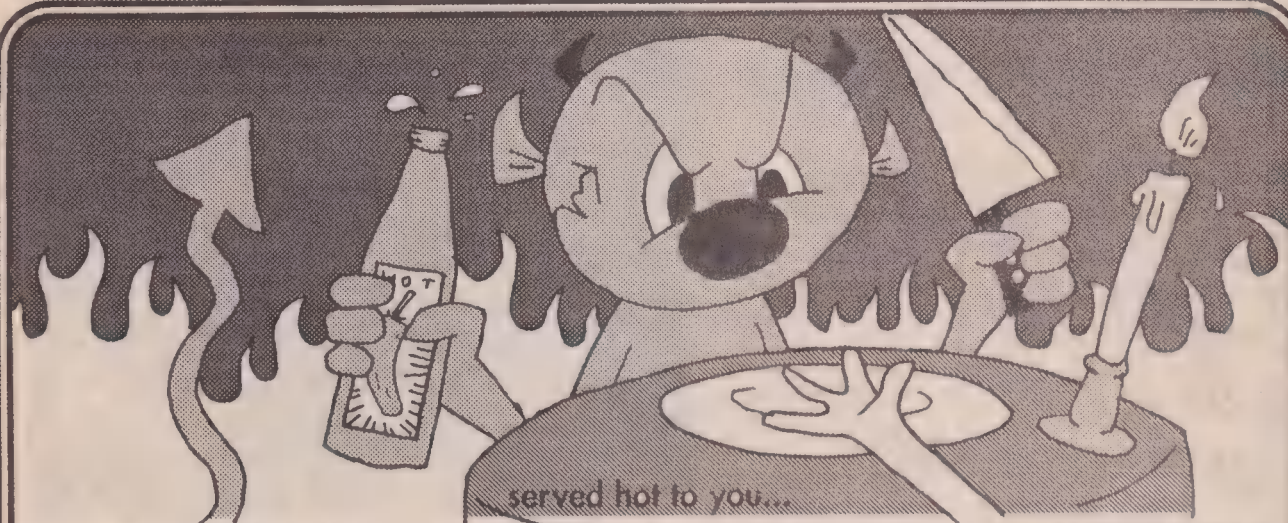
Live, the band cannot be equaled. Musically, they present a wall of noise and power, with crazed guitars and screamed, anguished vocals. The bass and pounding drums add more power, as well as stability. If I was forced to make a comparison, perhaps allusions to various incarnations of Black Flag, mixed with a heavy dose of modern AmRep stuff (like Today Is The Day) might be made. But these don't rest easy. At times, Deadguy defies comparisons.

But please note that Deadguy is a lot more than just music. Watching them play is an intense experience. Tim ~~screams~~ screams and moves like a possessed. Dave beats his drums as if they were his enemies. Crispy, by no means a small man, plays crunched down low, like a tightly wound coil ready to snap. He does vocals well, and his mike is placed low to the ground for him to sing into.



Keith and his guitar are never at rest. He moves and swings with every chord, threatening to destroy anything that comes near him. Deadguy are a spectacle not to be missed.

So where does Deadguy go from here? It's hard to say. They play a lot of local shows with low door prices. Some people seem to think they want to sell out and jump to a major. This I don't know. Ask them. But this I do know - Deadguy play great music that is fast, raw, and powerful. And these days, that's very rare. Check them out. They won't disappoint.



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VINELAND

Post-punk, post-Mothra, and definitely post-Bitch Magnet

by Jodi Shapiro

I first heard of Vineland about a year and a half ago, mentioned in passing by a friend. They were called Mothra back then, and all I really knew for sure was that Bob Bannister (Fire In The Kitchen, Blowgun) played guitar and Jon Fine (Bitch Magnet) played guitar and sang. They had a few local shows and then kinda disappeared.

Oh, yeah. Bitch Magnet. Let's get it out of the way now. Practically everyone I know has a Bitch Magnet story, and I'm no different. When I finally found Vineland's one and only single, "Archetype"/"Unfriendly" (Land Speed/Matt) I put all those stories out of my mind. Comparisons aren't fair, but inevitable. Kinda like what happens with Rapeman and Shellac. Anyway, the single's soaked in layers of guitar, promising big and wonderful things.

Jon gave me a tape of their newer stuff (post single work, but pre- the current lineup), and it's a lot more melody-driven than the single. The clearer production helps too, giving the vocals an emotional edge that kind of got buried before. At times, their songs can be more punishing than any heavy metal you could imagine, at others more tender than a sappy 60's love ballad.

After about a year and a half (and almost a half-dozen members filtering in and out) they've finally stabilized a lineup. The Vineland of today are:

Jon Fine: Guitar, Singing
Eamon Martin: Bass
Fred Weaver: Guitar
David Tritt: Drums

In theory, all good conversations occur over meals, like in *My Dinner With Andre*. OK, maybe that's a bad example. The questions were asked in a noisy East Village cafe. The answers were ripe with humor. After eating quasi-breakfast food (them) and ingesting massive amounts of coffee (me), and Jon begins at the beginning...

Q: I gotta ask you, did you get the name from that Vonnegut book?

Jon: Pynchon.

Q: Pynchon? Sorry, my pseudo-intellectualism is showing.

Jon: [laughs] No, actually it's from a Patti Smith song, she's talking about going down to Vineland and I thought it was cool.

Q: It's a town in New Jersey. [Editor's note: Patti Smith grew up in Vineland, NJ and worked a minimum-wage factory job there which inspired her first single, "Piss Factory."]

Jon: There were two guys at our show in Princeton who were actually from there.

Q: It's also a personality scale that psychologists use. [handing Jon a copy of one]

Jon: This is cool. It's a test?

Q: Yeah, for child psychologists. It helps them get to know the kid better or something.

Jon: I'll probably fail it. [looks at Eamon] Here's one for you--"Uses eraser without tearing paper." [laughs around table].

David: Was Chicago from Chicago?

Eamon: Yeah, they were, actually.

Q: Black Oak Arkansas were from Black Oak, Arkansas.

Jon: Well, we're not from Vineland, we're from New York. Make sure that's clear.

Q: OK, give me some history. I know it's boring, but I need some.



Vineland

Photo by Jodi Shapiro

Jon: About the lineups?

Q: Yeah. How'd you find these guys?

Jon: When the single came out, Fred wrote me. He was going to set up a show at State College [in Pennsylvania]. I had to call him and cancel because our guitarist [Bannister] was leaving to get married and be a father, so he wrote me a letter saying he heard we needed a guitarist...We placed an ad in the Village Voice, we listed King Crimson, Slint, Black Flag and Television.

Eamon: Don't forget Flint. [laughs]

Jon: Yeah, one had a band called Flint. We got a lot of calls from Adrian Belew fans, which was kind of scary.

David: Fred was the Flint fan.

Jon: Fred was very into Flint. [laughs] I had a really bad experience earlier on with someone from out of town, who couldn't move here because of various reasons, that's Dave McGurgan, but Fred came here, jammed with us. He's moving here in a couple of weeks. Eamon came along after our first bassist left to join Mercury Rev [Gerald Menke]. Originally it was between him and this woman named Jenna. She didn't work out, but Eamon did...I've known David for a long time, I ran into him-

David: Your band opened for my band. It was one of those things.

Q: What band was this?

David: I was in Rat At Rat R, at the time.

Jon: When our second drummer left, I ran into David one night and he told me Blitzspeer had just broken up--

Q: You were in Blitzspeer? Holy shit. What a change.

David: I had like, a year of touring. We got signed to a label, got endorsements. I got signed to a drumstick company--

Jon: And what happened to this drumstick company?

David: [looking mock-sheepish] They went out of business. [laughs]

Jon: [prodding] And what happened after that?

David: Uh...Epic dropped us. [more laughs]

Jon: There's an industry lesson for ya.

David: I got to see how the other side lives for a few years. We had lots of equipment, lots of tech people, it was really ridiculous. You're living on like 10 dollars a day, per diem, and there's no glamour involved. There is this *Circus* magazine myth, and when we got signed to a major label, I thought I was going to live it. Now I know that when you're on a major label, all that means is that you're in debt. Unless you have a platinum or a gold record. So basically, to avoid making that mistake again, I opted to work with Jon and these guys--

Jon: [snickering] Because we're destined for failure, right?

David: Because of a sheer love of the music. I really love the music that we're doing, and I think that's more important than having a career as a rock star.

Jon: What a sob story.

David: Violins [makes hand motions]!

Jon: [to Fred] OK, tell her your story.

Fred: Well, I was in this band. We did nothing.

Jon: You had a single!

Fred: Oh yeah, we had our big New York debut at ABC No Rio to about eight people. Right now there are some really good bands playing there that are all bummed out on New York.

Jon: [to Eamon] What's your story?



Vineland again

Photo by Jodi Shapiro

Eamon: Nothing. I was in a really bad band, and I broke it up. Then I came here. I got to play with real musicians...

Jon: And then he came to play with us. He said he was into trashy rock, so I had this really bad thought, like he was into garage rock or something. He turned out to be into math-rock as much as everybody else.

Q: Since there've been so many lineups, your output has been kinda small. Is it hard to write songs with that kind of uncertainty?

Jon: So far I've done most of the songwriting myself, the most recent stuff is a bit more collaborative. Geographically, it's hard to practice and to collaborate before, because everyone lived somewhere else. Now everyone lives in New York, except for Fred. We still play some stuff that survived from the earlier lineups. The songs took a long time to get finished.

David: And when you work with people who are bitter, jaded and apathetic like Eamon and Jon...

Jon: Hey, I'm not bitter.

David: Well, I'm jaded and apathetic. And I'm definitely bitter.

Q: I'm supposed to ask you what it's like to be a band in New York. There are many bands here and they all have a genre, at least according to certain music critics here. What's yours? How do you fit in the 'scene', whatever that is. People want to know this kind of stuff.

Jon: The 'indie' scene is a lot of different things, you know, like there's [Glenn] Branca and Wider, then there's other bands like Ruby Falls. The whole indie-pop scene kinda bums me out, it's not very imaginative. I mean, there's a bunch of bands who play similar music, and it's called a 'scene'. Other than that, there's nothing in common.

David: What scene is Rude Buddha in?

Eamon: Clowns for Progress.

Jon: I think we just fit into 'rock', dammit.

David: Pre-punk rock, like the New York Dolls.

Jon: Jesus Christ [rolls eyes]

Eamon: Math rock, that's our genre.

Q: Explain the phenomena that is math rock.

Jon: It's really a cheap tag put on bands that use weird time signatures, odd guitar tunings. A little less verse-chorus-verse than, say, Unrest. Longer songs, longer instrumental passages. Bands like Don Caballero, Slint, Pitchblende, Bastro, Bitch Magnet....

Q: What's that last one? Bitch what?

Jon: Boy, you're funny today. [thinks] Breadwinner, Rapeman maybe. Actually, Breadwinner is sort of like the epic math rock band, the purest example. We're a lot less math rock than they are. But we have slide rules on stage.

Q: And you say you don't know anything about computers.

Jon: Well, math isn't computers. Besides, my math is pure, it's organic. I do it all on paper.

Q: So are their subdivisions in math rock? Are there quadratic bands? Geometrical bands?

Jon: I have no idea. [thinks a little] Actually, there could be. You have your 7/5 people. Like Pitchblende, they're playing in 12, but it's broken up into 7 and 5, which is really sort of silly, but they make it work...Actually, the chorus of "Amicus Brief" is a similar device, though the 12 count is broken up more erratically. It's 2 3 4, followed by 2 3 4, since it's alternating measures of 12 and 9. Is this total gibberish?

Vineland songs are sort of like Oscar Madison (actually, like Walter Matthau in general): when you're unfamiliar with them they come across as rough and hard to get along with, but once acquainted, you see there's a real sweetness inside that keeps 'em going. It becomes more apparent when you see them live, when the quieter parts are warmer and the louder parts are more spiteful.

Take, for instance, the show at the Knitting Factory in July. The first few songs were good, but I was waiting for something—that one sound I know Jon can get with his guitar, that one chord that so many of my favorite bands have. He gets it eventually, and it continues through the whole set, culminating in a display that borders on violence. After smacking his Les Paul into his amp, he rips the strings off, one by one. After a minute or so of feedback howl, he kicks it over, disgusted. It's beautiful, in a car accident sort of way.

Q: Have you toured a lot so far?

Jon: With other versions of Vineland we've played Boston, Philly, DC...Oberlin Ohio. Some places in the midwest.

Q: When are you going to do a more encompassing roadtrip?

Jon: When we get more stuff out. First there have to be more singles, or whatever, because you can't find the first one. We're at a weird time now. We toured in November, before the single came out, but there wasn't much synergy in the band. I'm touring monster, I'll go out for however long, because I love it. I don't know how these guys feel about it.

Q: But there's newer stuff on the tape, why don't you just press those up?

Jon: There was never a stable lineup until now. There's a song that's supposed to be on a compilation for Big Cat, but I don't see any reason for putting it out.

Eamon: [into tape recorder] It's not that good.

Jon: I'm very fond of it, but it's just not that representative. We've got newer stuff, but people who've been seeing our shows for a while have been seeing the same songs over and over.

Q: [to Eamon] You played with a credit card instead of a pick last night.

[laughs around the table]

Jon: I told you she'd notice that.

Eamon: I get a bigger rock sound with a credit card. I use it all the time.

Q: Is it Mastercard or Visa?

Eamon: American Express. Gold and Platinum cards.

Jon: One day we're going to be on the road, and the cops are gonna pull us over and search us for pot because we have long hair. They're gonna find all these phone cards and credit cards with different names on 'em in Eamon's bass case and we're never gonna be able to explain it.

Q: You hardly move when you play. None of you do, it's like Jon stands in the middle, and the rest of you kinda stand off to the side.

Eamon: Well, the Knitting Factory is so spacious that I had to stand in the corner.

Q: By the incense, no less.

Jon: They move sometimes. It's not like I tell them they can't.

Q: Since you wore a Grim Reaper shirt last night, tell us the appeal of death metal, with a capital D.

Jon: Well, it's gone downhill recently, but there's still bands like Sepultura that are pretty bludgeoning. It's bizarre that they're built up on all these images of evisceration, cutting people up. There are kids in study hall listening to bands like Abattoir and Scythe.

Just when we went to press, David Tripp left the band. Jon says he's uncertain if he'll return to the drum stool. Douglas Scharin of Codeine will probably fill in for a while, doing a mini-tour in the fall.



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by Jim Testa

When the four members of Sound Advice arrived at New York University, none of them were thinking about music. Drummer Marc Jordan was there to study English, bassist Ravi Subramanian and guitarist Matt Szwed were enrolled in NYU's prestigious film program, and vocalist Jason Ellis planned to major in theater. Now, four years later, college has become something they worry about when they're not busy being in a band.

It's not easy making yourself heard in New York's overcrowded club scene, where scores of unsigned bands compete for attention at clubs that routinely book five to eight bands a night, seven nights a week. "There are too many clubs, too many bands, and not enough decent gigs where you can actually get paid," notes Szwed. "If we hadn't had a lot of our friends from school come to see us when we started playing shows, we probably would've performed to nothing but empty rooms. And even now, our draw really fluctuates. It's great in September, when there are all these new kids in the dorms and they're all looking for something

to do. But then they start to feel their way around, and well, there is an awful lot of distractions in New York. There are too many things to do at night around here."

Still, Sound Advice has managed to survive and even claw their way a little higher on the heap, in large part thanks to a unique sound that eschews grunge, noise, and funk for vibrant, intelligent pop music. "None of us knows how to describe the way we sound," says vocalist Jason Ellis. "It's more like what we don't sound like. We're not another funk band, we're not a noise band." Adds drummer Marc Jordan, "I think the most important thing about our sound is that we don't sound like anyone else."

Sound Advice's appeal starts with Ellis' onstage charisma, a by-product of his theater training perhaps but an undeniable source of the band's magnetism - especially at a time when the studied nonchalance of so much indie rock is threatening to turn stage presence into a lost art. Add to that guitarist Matt Szwed's knack for memorable riffs and big, catchy hooks, and a rhythm section that's simple, solid, and powerful, and you have a band equally adept at entertaining a room full of college students and catching the

SOUND a d v i c e



ear of the typically jaded New York clubgoer.

The band came together almost by accident, during those first magical days of freshman year when new friendships blossom and first impressions aren't always what they seem. "Marc and I were on the soccer team and Jason was my roommate in the dorm," relates Szwed. "Neither one of us was too happy at the time." "Yeah," adds Jason, "I had this dumb jock for a roommate and he thought he was stuck with ■ Star Trek nerd." "Well," counters Matt, "you were wearing your Mr. Spock shirt the first time we met!" Marc and Matt's moms met in the stands during a soccer match and, of course, talked about their sons. "So my mom told me that Matt played guitar, and his mom told him that I played drums," explains Jordan. "So Matt and I talked and we decided we'd try and start a band."

Originally, Sound Advice had another bassist and Jason as "the temporary interim singer, because none of us thought he was going to work out," says Jordan. When the first bassist didn't work out, the group drafted Ravi Subramanian - who was in ■ computer class with Jordan - and the band started looking for gigs..

When the band needed ■ demo tape, two of the members enrolled in a Demo Making class in the music department and used the university's facilities to tape their first songs. The artwork came from the computer lab. The group also hooked up with business major Paul Kontonis - now an NYU alumnus and pharmaceutical salesman - who agreed to be their manager. With the computer expertise they've picked up in class, the band recently completed an interactive presskit, complete with member profiles, photos, and sound clips from several songs. Subrahmanian, who has extended his interest in film to computers, is also working on ■ CD-Rom for the band.

The band has always enjoyed ■ good draw in New York, but then, college bands usually do. "You have to remember when it was that we started the band," notes Jason. "It was 1991 and there was a lot of other stuff happening in music. After 'Smells Like Teen Spirit,' all of ■ sudden it was a very cool thing to start paying attention to college bands, or at least

the kind of music that college bands play. And it was a very exciting time to be in a band too."

"Yeah," notes Matt. "All of ■ sudden, it seemed like being in a band was something that you could actually do for a living, not just some hobby you did on the side."

Now entering their final year at school (all but Ellis, who had to take an extended hiatus due to lack of funds,) the members of Sound Advice have been turning their thoughts to what life will be like after they're through being a college band.

"Even last year, we all moved out of the dorms and it really hurt our draw," says Szwed. "And there are already four new bands I know of who came out of the same dorm we did. So one of the things we're trying



At Water Music, with Gene Holder producing

to do now is extend ourselves beyond our immediate surroundings, trying to reach ■ broader audience here in New York and also play out of town more."

"All of us wish things would roll along ■ little faster," adds Jordan, "but I love being in New York. Sure, it's tough in a lot of ways, especially because there are just so many bands here. But I can't think of ■ more challenging place to be ■ band. And it's great because you're always being pushed to change and to grow."

"None of us are going to start wearing a suit and tie and look for a nine-to-five job come June 1," says Ellis. "I think that's one thing we learned in college, that none of us are normal enough to actually work for a living."

And what, umm, sound advice does Sound Advice have for the incoming NYU Class Of '98? "Don't buy drugs in Washington Square Park," says Jason.

by Rei Nishimoto

Hardcore comes in all sorts. Some bands blend metal, rap, funk, and every other style known to man. But not Madball. These five psychos, featuring ex-members of Agnostic Front, stick to their roots like glue and are ready to terrorize the world with their debut full-length album on Roadrunner Records, *Set It Off*. Two of the members, guitarist Matt Henderson and the original madball himself, throat-shredder Freddie "Mad Fuckin' Ball" Cricien, talked about their new lp, a then upcoming tour of Europe, and the New York hardcore lifestyle.

Q: How did Madball come together?

Matt: Freddie is Roger (Miret) of Agnostic Front's younger brother. When he was little, about six years old, he would come on stage with his brother and sing with the band. Madball was Freddie's nickname, which they gave him. Freddie eventually moved from his home in Florida to New York and joined his brother. When Agnostic Front toured Europe, they hyped up Madball as a real band, which is wasn't really at the time.

Then in 1989, we recorded our first 7-inch, "Ball Of Destruction." Later, we recorded our second 7-inch, "Droppin' Many Suckers." It's pretty much like Madball is the 90's version of Agnostic Front.

Q: Who from Madball was in Agnostic Front?

Freddie: Matt, Vinnie (Stigma, guitar) and Will Shepler (drums.)

Q: Where in New York are you guys based now?

Matt: Lower Manhattan, Little Italy.

Q: Over the last few years, New York's hardcore scene has begun to rise again, producing many quality bands. But there was a period of time when New York's scene was largely ignored. What happened?

Freddie: The scene was getting so good that it just destroyed its own scene. That's how it became forgotten. The only way to revive it was to start from scratch. Then there were new bands such as 25 Ta Life that came around and started up the scene again.

Q: Is there a special bond between bands in the scene now?

Freddie: Yeah, there is that old family-style of bond within the scene here. We need that because that's how the scene got destroyed. There was fighting between bands and the scene was destroyed.

Q: What does the title *Set It Off* mean? Does it refer to the gun on the CD sleeve?

Matt: No, it's saying you've got to get it goin' on. You gotta get ready to go. Don't sit around but do something about it.

Freddie: Hardcore is about releasing natural frustration. It's about the realities of what happens to you.

Q: How are responses to the album so far?

Matt: Better than I thought it would be. It's been good in the U.S. and Europe.

Q: Are there any other new bands that you are into recently?

Freddie: We like a lot of new stuff, like the new Machine Head we think is cool. The new Downset, the new Obituary, Life of Agony, and Biohazard, which we know really well.

Q: How did you get signed to Roadrunner?

Matt: We were signed by Howie Abrams, who worked at our old label, In-Effect, when we did our 7 inches. He remembered us from then and wanted to bring us to Roadrunner.

Freddie: He knew a good thing when he heard it, not to brag or anything.

Q: How about a full U.S. tour?

Freddie: In the fall, probably. We're working on getting out to the West Coast, so we'll be there

soon.

Q: What do you want to accomplish in the coming future?

Freddie: We don't want to get crazy or anything. We don't want ourselves happening at a major label. Of course, if we're offered a deal at a major, then we're not going to turn it down. But we're taking things one day at a time. We don't want to rush things.



Photo by Deanna Bailey

MADBALL

Probably the most memorable thing I've ever said about Ex-Vegas is that, pound for pound, I think they are the most talented band in New Brunswick right now. And given all the talented bands in New Brunswick at the moment, that's saying quite a lot. But beyond that, I often have trouble saying anything about Ex-Vegas. The group started out as Vegas Crash, but kept getting confused with Crash Vegas, so they changed it. Their sounds is, well, swirly and sonic, sort of 4AD-ish with Amy Jacobs' pretty vocals and those distorted guitars hammering away at one another, yet soft and alluring ■ the same time. I don't know, they're one of those bands I have a hard time describing. Rather than even try and cope with it, I just asked the band to interview themselves -- always a dicey prospect, but what the heck, there ■■■ a couple of college graduates in the group and I figured the results couldn't be any worse than most of the other dreck in this hideous fanzine. So here it is, judge for yourself. - Jim Testa

Thierry: My ■■■ is Thierry Bonnaire. I'm 30 years old. I'm a lab technician, and I ■■■ born in Dijon, France, the mustard capital of the world. I play a blue guitar.

Jim: Is your father Grey Poupon?

Alex: My name's is Alex. I'm thirty. I was born in Ann Arbor Michigan. I play the cream guitar.

Amy: My name is Amy. I'm 25 and I'm from Three Bridges, NJ, originally, now known ■■■ Condo Heaven. It used to be all farms. I work as a research assistant. I sing and play a big, shiny red guitar.

Rich: My ■■■ is Rich Sternin. I'm 25 I was born in New Brunswick, NJ in Robert Wood Johnson hospital. I'm currently unemployed and I play the drums, the cans, the skins.

Jim: Jim Halsey. Born in Oceanside, CA. I play the bass, and I'm the King of Insurance.

Q: Why do we call our band "Motorhead"?

Rich: That's ■■■ excellent question.

Thierry: We don't remember.

Q: Were you a part of the original Hoboken scene?

Chorus of "No."

Q: What is it that you say when you're fed up and you want to say "bastard?"

Amy: I say "bastard."

Rich: Are ■■■ recording this?

Alex: Yep. You're on tape.

Q: What do you guys get fed up with the most?

Stunned silence.

Q: Why do you guys give yourselves mean names?

Thierry: Because we're losers. We're going nowhere.

Q: Are you another pizza oriented band?

Chorus of yesses.

Q: Have you ever been fistfucked by some god holding ■ rake in his hand?

Alex (enthusiastically): YES!

Thierry: Plenty of times. In the morning. I remember one time in the spa...

Q: How did ■■■ meet? Let's have some History about ExVegas.

Alex: Thierry and I started making noise in his basement, because ■■■ were angry and hated everyone else. Just two guitars, two amps, and two furious people in ■ very small room. I used to go totally deaf for hours. Thierry smashed his guitar on the ground and snapped the neck off of it the very first time ■■■ played together.

Rich: I was learning how to play drums and you were not getting rid of me yet. Alex and I were in a cover band playing polka tunes.

Ex Vegas

PASS THE GREY POUPON, AND
DON'T SPARE THE FEEDBACK

Alex: Then the three of us formed a band called Hex.49 that never played out. Then the bass player quit, much to everyones relief, and ■■■ threw the singer out. Amy and I were already good friends, having played in a band together several years back. We finally convinced her to sing and then we couldn't find ■ bass player for about 6 months.

Rich: We've been through six bass players before Jim.

Amy: We just tear them apart like rabid jackals. Jim changed everything for the band. He is the motivational force.

Q: So what's it like being on Megaforce?

Amy: It's like... shit. This was a bad idea, going through other fanzines for questions.

Q: Have you been in any other zines?

Alex: Not really.

Amy: We've been reviewed a few places. Everybody hates us.

Q: What do you think about New Brunswick? What's so good about New Brunswick? And what's ■■■ bad about New Brunswick? How do you think New Brunswick has accepted you, as ■ whole?

Alex: Wait you're asking too many questions...

Thierry: New Brunswick is a fine city. They destroyed Greasy Tony's. It's the biggest error ever.

Rich: New Brunswick's great because the Court Tavern's great.

Alex: It's where people make the difference! Communities of nice people. The Court's great, there are some other places..

Amy: The bands rock!

Thierry: There are a lot of good bands and a lot of cooperation.

Alex: There's more of a scene right now than there has been in a while, at least more than any of us have ever been a part of.

Q: What make you stand out as a live act?

Amy: I'll watch us on Saturday and let you know.

Thierry: I think our main objective live is to bring a lot of energy. Bring the energy level up and just get out of control.

Alex: My main objective is to overthrow the government.

Jim: I think we're definitely best live.

Amy: Sometimes we suck. And when we suck, we suck hard.

Alex: Yeah, we're not consistently mediocre. We either rock really hard or we suck so bad that it's an embarrassment to have been at the gig.

Q: When are you going to start to make money? (Alex's mom's question)

Amy: Let's say something interesting. C'mon! Let's represent ourselves as more interesting than we actually are.

Thierry: I really like the D.I.Y. thing we've got going. It forces us to play a lot of gigs to put out singles.

Q: How do you write your songs? How would you describe your music?

Thierry: I think Alex and I were most touched off by Husker Du and other SST bands in the early and mid eighties. Husker Du touched on something.

Alex: I think we have a wide range of influences.

Thierry: I like Green Day and all these bands that play pretty generic punk, in a way, and they're HUGE. It's really quite amazing. Nirvana really opened it up and changed the music industry. If you compare the early eighties circa REO Speedwagon.

Alex: I think a lot of it was probably inevitable. After the Sex Pistols the record labels knew there was something there. In the US by the mid eighties there was a critical mass in the music listening/buying public. All it takes is one good band to get distributed in the right way. Nevermind was a great album and Nirvana came along at the right time and place. But there have also been hundreds of other really great bands. Doing equally interesting and great music that have never had that kind of exposure.

Q: Why do you think people want to come see you?

Alex: Because they want to get drunk.

Amy: Because they think Thierry's cute.

Chorus: Yeah. Thierry's the man!

Q: What kind of plans do you have for the future?

Thierry: We'd like to get out and tour. Play out and meet different people and keep a great attitude and just be ourselves.



ALEX & AMY, Ex-VEGAS

Alex: Yeah. And write some interesting music.

Q: If you could go on tour with one band, who would it be?

Alex: The Mekons.

Thierry: The Fall.

Amy: The Sex Pistols.

Rich: The Jesus Lizard.

Jim: I don't know... um... Roxette... or the Counting Crows.

Alex: I've been growing my hair in mourning for Kurt Cobain.

Jim: Alex isn't going to cut his hair until Kurt Cobain is resurrected.

Alex: I'd like to say that Norm from Surfers from the Future is the greatest guitar player I've ever seen.

Q: When is your next single coming out?

Rich: Hopefully by the end of October. It should have some great artwork by New Brunswick's own EGun.

Amy: What could we talk about that would get people interested in us musically that don't know us?

Thierry: (Reads several bible verses in German.)

Alex: We like to play rock 'n' roll and have a good time.

Thierry: I like to get up there and totally get out of myself, sweat like a pig...

Alex: Punk rock changed my life.

Thierry: Mine too.

Alex: It made it possible for anybody to pick up a guitar.

Q: What are you trying to do musically?

Thierry: It's an outlet.

Alex: I don't know. I struggle with those kind of questions.

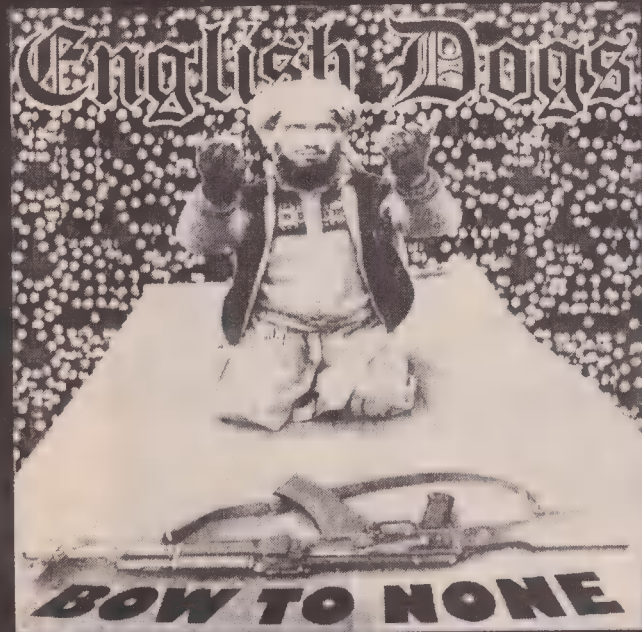
Thierry: We've made a lot of friends. We're personable. We really appreciate the people who come to see us. I like the violence we convey on stage.

Amy: Violence?

Thierry: Yeah.

Thierry: I'd like to acknowledge all the help the Urchins have given us.

Everyone: Yeah!



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INDEPENDENCE

By Mat Gard

Exactly five years ago ■ I write this, I moved to New Brunswick. I had heard a lot of good things about the town in the way of Punk Rock. Scott Hall shows, Separate Peace, Sticks & Stones, and so on... But for the most part, most of those things were not to be found by the time I arrived to start my college education at Rutgers College.

But over on the other side of town, at 54 Welton Street, there lived the Bouncing Souls. They had moved into town a few months earlier and were playing a bunch of local shows. They got ■ pretty bad rep pretty quick, not really from anything they did but rather by the antics of the local thugs they hung out with, and ■ of the cretins who went to ■ them play.

The music from this period wasn't much to speak of either. They played ■ odd hybrid of funk that made them sound more like the Red Hot Chili Peppers than anything else. But they were the biggest thing in New Brunswick for ■ while. And they never looked beyond its borders.

Then a few years ago, the band decided they weren't happy with the shit they ■ doing. So they chucked all the old material and headed in new directions. The new sound had a harder punk feel, mixed in with pop elements and schlocky 80's goofiness. Says bassist Brian about the change, "It just wasn't working. But for the first time in a long time, I was making music I would listen to."

They began to make an effort to be more than just a New Brunswick band. They toured last summer with Lifetime and have toured the country several times since. They have released two CD's and two 7-inches in the newer style, and I

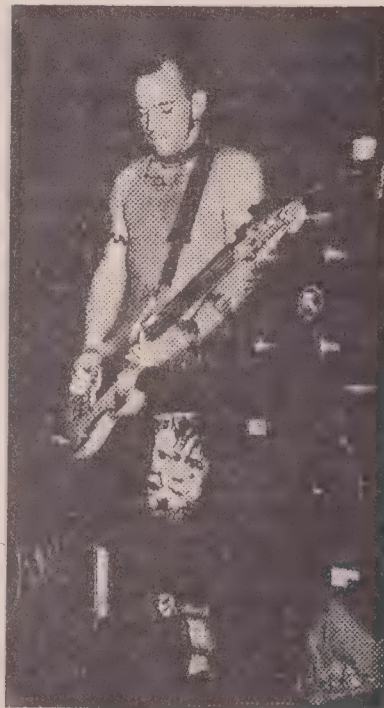


have to say, they're damn good now.

Their live show is also lots of fun. They play hard and fast, dress up in silly costumes, and play a lot of really cheesy 80's covers. They draw pretty big crowds anywhere in Jersey that they play. The newer Souls crowd are more into having fun than fucking shit up, ■ you leave their shows with lots of good feelings.

But now, sad to say, the Souls have left New Brunswick. After almost five years as the biggest thing in Brunfuss and sharing a funky house, they felt it was time to move on. But while they now live apart, they still practice often and they're still playing shows all the time.

The Bouncing Souls have changed ■ lot in the last five years, and right now, they're the strongest they've ever been - sillier, smellier, and funnier than ever. Check 'em out if you get the chance - they don't disappoint.



BOUNCING SOULS

Brian - Greg - Pete - Sal

B u b b l e g u m T h u n d e r

Down To Earth, And Just Slightly Fucked

by Brandon Stosuy

Besides being the loudest band of all time, Bubblegum Thunder is also the most ambitious and staunchly independent group to spring up in the graveyard A&R oriented scene of New Brunswick in quite some time. Only in their current lineup for a few months, they have already put out three 7"s, recorded with Steve Albini twice, and trekked out on some pretty extensive tours. Now they're about to release their debut full length record on their own Model Rocket label and then head out on the road one more time. I spoke to the band at the broken down production room of WRSU because we couldn't think of a better place to go. They warned me that they may or may not have been drinking. This was never fully established.

The four boys who comprise Bubblegum Thunder are pretty good at hiding below the grainy surface of the rock star infestation in New Brunswick. The way things look, they won't be coming up for air any time soon. "Basically, we're the outcast band because we don't give a shit about the bullshit that most bands in New Brunswick worry about. We don't suck anybody's dick," drummer and part-time Hydrogeologist Brett Martin said. "We're burning all our bridges in New Brunswick," agreed guitarist and Seton Hall alumnus Sandor Kekesi. "We try not to think about it."

"Everyone in this town is so concerned about getting a slice of some pie, they think that some dickhead A&R rep from New York is going to wait into their lives and give them this juicy contract that's going to make them stars or something. The problem is that nobody gets out of town to play shows (except, maybe a big audition night at CBGB's or the equivalent) so they don't realize how many kick ass bands there are out there and how difficult it is to stand out from the masses," Martin added.

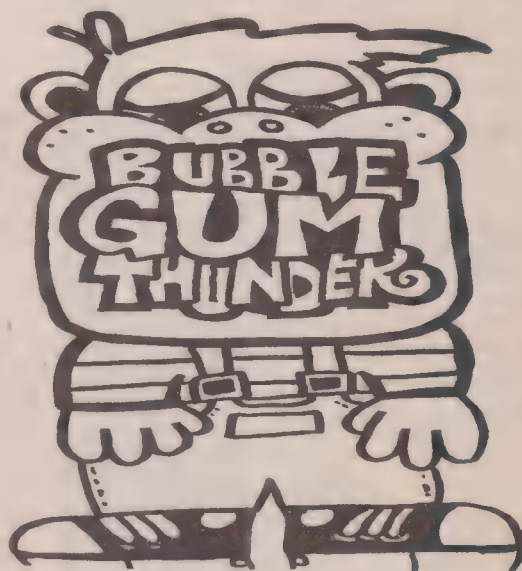
"It's really just small time pretending to be big time," Kekesi concluded. "The last time we played the Court Tavern we were told not to play there again," guitarist and gourmet chef Joseph Kosuda said. "that's not a good sign."

Bubblegum Thunder began playing together four years ago, but spent three years honing their sound and switching instruments before they released their first 7". "We weren't solidified," Martin said. "We weren't happy with what we were writing early on, so we just waited until things got comfortable."

Now that things are comfortable, they want to do things right. This means going it alone. They left the New Brunswick-based DaDa records after two 7" releases because of clashes with the label's philosophy. They then formed Model Rocket, a label to release their music as well as the music of their friends. "We were doing everything to begin with and now we're just actually putting our name on it," Kekesi said.

Martin agreed, "You're not going to make any money playing in a band; if you think you are, quit now. So when people start talking percentages and points etc., already at this level, I want nothing to do with them. You should always have complete control of your music."

As far as future ambitions to work with other larger independent labels, the band had this to say: "We haven't sent tapes to anyone," Kekesi said "It doesn't work like that." "Nobody is going to give you something for nothing," added Martin. "There are very few



independent labels that I would be interested in, I've heard too many horror stories from other bands. Our philosophy is just to write good songs, record, and tour as much as possible. If that doesn't work, fuck, just have a great time."

From what I've seen, Bubblegum Thunder's DIY attitude is unique in a passive scene where most bands are content primping for any major label scout who wanders into town offering a free meal at Denny's. Their heavy, not-so-radio friendly Am Rep/Touch And Go sound is also completely different. One critic describes them as "Midwestern Noise, even though they're from New Jersey." And another hapless music snob thought they were "Fugazi playing a Helmet song."

"When we were making music, we don't think of emulating any bands," Kekesi said. "If they need a reference point that's okay, but we don't try to sound like the bands they're comparing us to."

"Someone said I sound like the singer from a band called Soundgarden," Kosuda said. "Who's Soundgarden?"

They also stress the fact that the band's sound has continued to grow through the release of each 7-inch. "We've progressed a lot," Kosuda said. "Our new record needs to be listened to very loudly. It's got tremendous depth- you can hear the whole room."

"Our older stuff isn't indicative of us right now," Martin agreed. "We're going in a direction that is still heavy as shit, but a little more cerebral. We're integrating things more."

The band stresses that although they trekked all the way to Albini's trendy Chicago studio to record, they didn't do it just to cash in on those ever elusive punk points. "He may have been in the room when we were recording," Kekesi said.

"When the opportunity to record with Steve came up I was completely optimistic," said Martin. "As the events unfolded I was even happier. That man knows his shit inside and out. It was funny to me because a lot of people came down on us for recording with him, saying we were trying to be cool and so forth. But the bottom line is we recorded with Steve, who has some of the best recording equipment available, for less money than it would have cost us to record at the local sound studio and have Joe Blow turn the knobs."

"For a beginning artist, recording with Albini is a great experiment because you can't blame the results on the studio tricks you could do," Kosuda said. "What we have is very much a live recording."

"There are no tricks involved, no compression etc....," Martin said. "It's a documentation of our band at that very moment."

The records done. What's next? "Tour, tour, tour," Martin laughed. "What?" Kekesi asked. "Let's just sit around for a year and then do another record."

Actually, the band plans to do an early winter tour which will go through the south and Midwest. "This year it's an early winter tour, last year it was a mid winter tour and we almost died," exclaimed Martin. "We'll be dodging bankruptcy the whole time," Kekesi said.

"Please write us with your favorite barbecue spots in your cities," Martin injected. "C'mon, we're just really swell guys, we won't bite."

"Yeah, don't take all this bitching seriously," Kosuda said. "This is all so stupid."

That's the down to Earth, slightly fucked attitude of Bubblegum Thunder. They're the quiet, unhip locals who happen to have a

drummer who hits so hard he can't hear himself, a singer who reminds some people of John Wayne Gacy (Chicago's own homosexual serial killer), and the potential to render the Court Tavern an archaic term in the back of their collective subconscious.

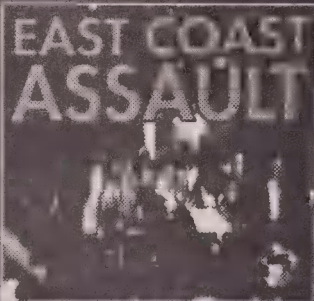
"Serial killer?" Kosuda asked, laughing. "But I don't have the skills."

"Sure you do, you just haven't fully developed them yet, they need to mature a little more," answers Martin. At least they're being honest.

"Everything we do is carefully calculated," Kekesi said wryly.

"Everything is a gimmick. It's all perfectly planned."

Write to Bubblegum Thunder at: Model Rocket Records, 382 George St., New Brunswick, N.J. 08901, or e-mail them at mdlrocket@aol.com

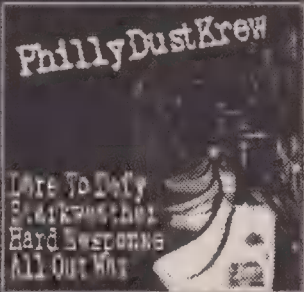



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Shirk Circus

Clowning Around With Punk 'N' Pop

by Tom Brebrie

Shirk Circus' new CD "Words to Say" is out now on Hoboken's Bar None label. It's a mix of melodic, powerful pop played, much like their live set at their recent record release party, with plenty of energy and guitar enrichment. There's no shortage of hooks or angst on this fine collection, and in my quest to meet bands that are tough to pigeonhole, I met up with Josh Silverman (vocals, guitars,) Dan Shafer (bass, vocals) & Frank Lieberum (drums, vocals). I'll be consistently lazy throughout this interview and usually not identify as to who said what.

Q: Why did you choose Bar None as your label?

SC: John Reynolds (from the Aquarian) ran into Josh at a show and introduced Glen Morrow to us, this was like two years ago.

Q: Where was this recorded?

SC: In the Melting Hopefuls basement studio, they call it the Womb, last December. We did the basic tracks in like an

hour, and did the vocals and other stuff later- Bar None told us if we got it done quickly, they'd get it out quickly. Turns out



Photo by Lynne Breitfeller

that later we bumped into Anthony Trance (of Sacred Denial fame, and who's now currently booking shows.), we had known him from our other band "25 Pills" - anyway - he tells us that the CD isn't coming out until August, it was supposed to happen in March!

Q: Sounds a lot like Jersey Beat when it comes to being on time. Is this your first release?

SC: Yeah, before that M.Y. Nation put out a CD, only 500 copies, it was mainly distributed at shows, and we did 2 demos prior to that. We're going to try to play out some more now, especially since one of us lost our jobs. Up to now, except for Stockton, NJ, we really haven't played out of the area.

Q: Are you happy with the way this CD turned out?

SC: Yeah, pretty much. There's not a lot of production and we didn't tinker ■ lot with it. We used to use more overdubs in the past, but we left all the mistakes in this one. Next time we think we might use more instruments and production.

Q: How's Bar None treating you?

SC: They have a new distributor that's nationwide and covers indie shops and places like Tower Records, so now people can get the CD - but will they buy it? We're supposed to be doing ■ video this month with Dave Anderson, maybe we'll get on 120 Minutes at 2 in the morning. In the meantime, we're playing an acoustic gig at McDonalds. Unfortunately, we can't film at McD's since MTV doesn't like advertising.

Q: Any European distribution planned?

SC: Robbie Fields from Posh Boy Records in CA said he wanted to put it out in Europe, but that needs to be worked out with Bar None. Other than that, we met some people who want us to go to Brazil to play.

Q: Is a tour planned soon?

SC: Our label wanted us to go at all costs, but we want it to have a purpose. There's no point going to cities where no one can get the CD just for the sake of saying we did a tour. We need ■ good booking agent. We figure if we wait till Nov. or Dec. - maybe there'll be five people at every show. We're hoping to tour with somebody we'd fit in with - like Sugar or the Fall.

Q: Do you really thiink you could hook up with ■ band like Sugar? I'm not saying you don't deserve to, but that doesn't sound like an easy task.

SC: It's all luck - it depends on our manager. It's who you know. Incidentally, we're also on CompuServe and America OnLine. I met up with Poshboy Records through the Internet. We also have a single coming out on New Red Archives.

Q: What did you guys do in the in-between period when Shirk Circus was not together?

SC: We were in 25 Pills - we had ■ pretty girl singer - it was our attempt to sell out, but no one was buying. We ended that, no one was having fun.

Q: Frank is the new drummer now, how'd you meet him?

Josh: He came to the audition and knew the songs - we never tried out anyone else, it just clicked. Plus he could sing. We never had three part harmonies before and he was good.

Frank: I used to be good.

Dan: He's married now.

Frank: Yeah, I've lost that testosterone.

Q: You're wife's not bitching about spending too much time with the band?

Frank: I don't spend time with the band, we haven't practiced since April!

Q: Anything you want to add?

Frank: The Calamari here is really good. Josh, tell him more about how we met.

Josh: We had 2 drummers before him, he used to be in a band with Al called Ultravision, and I was in ■ band with Al called Chair, and our old bass player knew him. We knew he lived somewhere around Verona. It was New Year's Eve, and we were at the second drummer's party, and I in my intoxicated state, broke a bottle and carved Frank's name in my arm.

Dan: That ■■ our one punk rock moment.

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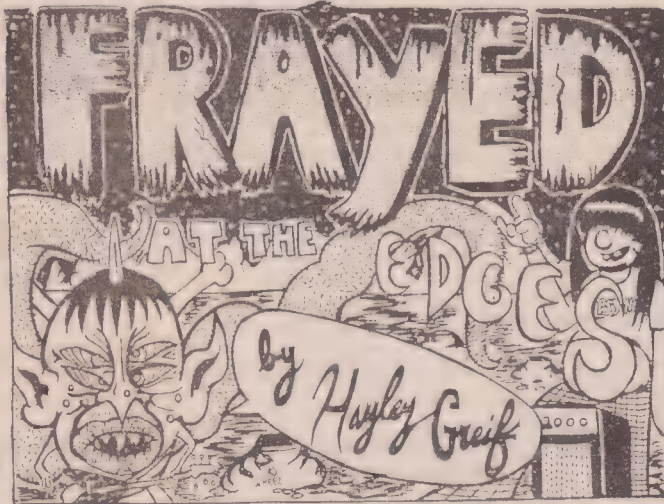
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It's that time again! Time for *Frayed At The Edges* to return and keep you updated on all the latest releases from the local area as well as the national scene. I have included many local bands I could, signed and unsigned, as well as good national acts that you should definitely check out! I'm going to keep this short because I'd like to get in many reviews I can. I'm looking for more local bands from New Jersey and New York to do reviews/interviews with in future columns. Hope everyone has had a great summer. As always, my



contact address is: Hayley Greif, PO Box 215, Hightstown, NJ 08520. I have just started my own metal fanzine, *A Visionary's Dream*, with Issue 1 available now. If you want to find out more about it, write to me at the above address.

I have become a major death/doom fan of late and there are a couple of bands I'd like to highlight. One is *Enchantment* and the other is *Amorphis*.

I knew I would like *ENCHANTMENT* when I read the bio, which said that they are contemporaries of such bands as *Anathema* and *My Dying Bride*, two of my favorite bands. The band is a five-piece from England and they have recently released their debut CD, *Dance The Marble Naked*. It is an incredible disc - I loved from the first time I put it into my CD player and haven't stopped playing it! The band effectively combines the heavy death feel with the moodiness of doom like old *Paradise Lost*. This 8 song CD (including the instrumental "Meadows") is full of atmospheric moods and passionate riffs that burrow deep into your mind and emotions. A couple of examples of this include the lead-off track "Kneading With Honey," which starts out with a 35 second orchestral introduction and is quickly followed by a powerful riff that moves the momentum upwards. "My Oceans Vast" is another song that begins slow and increases in tempo and stays that way through much of the song. Some other song titles are "The Touch of the Crown," "Carve Me In Sand," and "Of Acorns That Gather." Lead singer/lyricist Paul Jones has a talent for writing eloquent songs with such feeling that you can't help but respond. Jones's vocals, to me, accent the music and overall ambience of the disc. This is one release that I would definitely recommend to anyone into death, doom, or is just curious to hear new bands. I'm anxiously awaiting their next release!

The other release I'd like to focus on is the new CD by the Finnish band *Amorphis*. Their second full-length CD, entitled *Tales From The Thousand Lakes*, is now available on Nuclear Blast/Relapse Records. The lyrics on the CD are based on the Finnish national epic book *Kalevala*. Formerly a 4-piece, the band enlisted Kasper Martenson on keyboards and moog, allowing Jan Rechberger to concentrate on the drums. The 10 songs begin with an instrumental by Martenson and a female vocalist that set the tone for the rest of the CD: an air of intensity and beauty at the same time. The vocals and music here are typical of the death/doom scene but don't think that *Amorphis* is a typical band. They are unique in their approach to songwriting as seen in the topics they cover. This release, as aforementioned, is based on the book *Kalevala* and their first full-length release, *The Karelian Isthmus*, was based upon the historic Finnish battlefield of the same name. The band also creates a fantastic effect by using Ville Tuomi to do, as they call it, "all clean vox and speech." To me, this is what makes the CD. Tuomi does his thing on three of the standout songs for me, "Black Winter Day," "In The Beginning," and my favorite on the CD, "Into Hiding." Other song titles include "First Doom," "Forgotten Sunrise," and "Drowned Maid," - which reminds me of old *Paradise Lost* circa Gothic. *Amorphis* is another band that is making some great music in the death/doom realm and should be sought out by everyone that wants to hear the next generation of bands in this genre.

New Jersey's *GNOSTIC TRIBE* has a 9 song CD available now entitled *Inside Our Own*. This four-piece band is made up of Mark McClung (vocals), Marcus Connor (guitar),



Joshua Bobrovcan (bass), and Derrek Stolk (drums). I don't have any background info on the band as Jim sent this to me as a last minute addition to the column. The band has a name that got me curious to hear what they sound like. I can tell that these guys are fans of the grunge [redacted] as you [redacted] hear the Soundgarden and Pearl Jam influences throughout the disc. This isn't a bad thing because these guys are good at what they do and have used the influence to give form to their own variation of the grunge sound. The lyrics are emotional and well-written and a listener is able to visualize what is being said. Are you a fan of bands like Soundgarden and Pearl Jam? Then you should definitely get a copy of this for your collection. Their contact address is c/o Taurus Associates, PO Pox 112, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

Another band that I want to highlight here is [redacted] that has been around for some time now but has never received the critical acclaim they should have in the US. The band I'm speaking of is the English band Skyklad, who have their latest CD, *Prince Of The Poverty Line*, out on Noise Records. Part of the reason this band has gone unnoticed here is because Noise Records no longer has an US distributor and the only way to get a copy of the label's releases is on import. Anyway, back to the band. I got turned on to the band from a friend of mine who is a big fan of theirs. He got me into their previous release, *Jonah's Ark*, which made me anxious to hear the newest CD. Skyklad can be considered a thrash band that uses a female vocalist who also plays the violin and keyboards, for a sound all their own. The band also stands apart from many of the thrash bands out now because of the sentiments brought forth by vocalist/lyricist Martin Walkyier, who can elicit many emotions simply through the particular words he [redacted] and the way he uses them. A listener is able to identify with Walkyier because he writes as if he is having a conversation with the person about the things that effect us in today's society, like the fear of unemployment, homelessness, and the confusion [redacted] face everyday. Skyklad has eluded many on these shores but that should change because this is one band that deserves much better than that. They are intelligent, unique and innovative - don't overlook these guys!! Go to your local record store to find them on import or write directly to Noise Records at: Kurfurstenstr 23, 10785 Berlin, Germany.

A few months back, I got a flyer for a free demo from the New York band TrebleBOYS. I figured that I couldn't lose anything by sending [redacted] back and in return, I got a five song demo entitled "A Day In The Life Of ...BOB. Rich Stetens (guitar/vocals), Russell Sanchez (bass/vocals), and Scott Clark (lead vocals). I would say that the TrebleBOYS are a funky commercial band with an alternative type of vocal style by Clark. The backing vocals [redacted] well done and add to the appeal of the songs. The TrebleBOYS remind me of a more upbeat version of Warrior Soul. All five songs on the demo are entertaining and I found myself moving to the music. The songs on the tape are "Let Me Believe (in you)," "Simplified," the ballad "Walking The Wrong Way," "Lie To You," and the intriguingly named "Mary Go Round." A Day In The Life Of ...BOB is an interesting release that can get the TrebleBOYS [redacted] notice in the local area and what's more, you can get a copy for FREE. You can't go wrong here. Send all inquiries to the band at: PO Box 283, New York, NY 10014.

Another New York area band is the 4-piece CHAIN ANGEL, who released their four song demo, "Thrash Or Die," in the beginning of 1994. I didn't get much information on the band, so I'm not sure who the members are and what instruments they play. The information I got said that the band has a strong following and was named the Buzz Band in Rip magazine's March 1994 issue. Musically, the band reminds me of some early 80s bands with a very heavy (almost Sabbath-type) guitar sound. The vocalist sounds nasal, sort of like Vince Neil on the first Motley Crue album, though the vocals here [redacted] not as defined. I'm not really into this style of music anymore, but I found the songs to be easy to listen to and catchy. The sound quality could have been better if they had a bigger budget to work with but I give the band credit for producing it themselves and getting it so everything could be heard. For more information on the band write to them at: PO Box 46, New York, NY 10108.

I reviewed DESULTORY's debut release, *Into Eternity*, in Jersey Beat

#49 and was impressed with what I heard. Well, the band has returned with their sophomore effort, *Bitterness*, on Metal Blade Records and I have to say that I like this one even better. This release is more diverse [redacted] well as being more listener friendly. The band has maintained their heaviness and unique sound, like on the songs "Taste of Tragedy" and "Bleeding," but has also progressed, like on the lead off track, "Life Shatters" (my favorite track), and "Among Mortals." *Bitterness* is full of compelling images that have a profound effect on the listener through the lyrics as well as the music. The band once again recorded in Sweden's premier studio, Sunlight Studio, with Tomas Skosberg at the helm and this time they [redacted] assisted by Fred Estby from the band Dismember. Skosberg knows the band well and is able to get their best sound throughout the CD. With the release of *Bitterness*, Desultory shows [redacted] why they [redacted] not a typical death metal band and how they have found their own place within the metal genre.

I was wondering what a band with the unusual [redacted] of IF DARWIN PLAYS DRUMS would sound like, so to find out, I put in their 5 song demo, "Frail." They are a commercial metal band with an alternative slant. This four-piece band has been together since 1991, with bassist Eric Dobloski recently joining (Mike Kovacs plays bass on the demo). The rest of the members of If Darwin Played Drums are Big Steve H. (lead vocals, rhythm and lead guitar, and keyboards), Peti (lead vocals, lead and rhythm guitar), and Mark "The Hurricane" Watson (drums and percussion). I think having two vocalists. I have to give them thumbs up for that. Overall, I think that If Darwin Played Drums is a band that has successfully found ways to stretch the boundaries of this genre. More power to them. If you want to get in touch with the band, call Peter [redacted] (908) 249-8182.

One of the pioneers of the Florida death metal scene, OBITUARY, will have their fourth album released on Roadrunner Records in the beginning of September. On the new CD, *World Demise*, the band has gone back to their older sound to produce a stronger, heavier, and more powerful release as a follow-up to *The End Complete*. This release sees the band taking a different approach to the recording and presentation of their music. One can see it immediately by looking at the cover art and the inlay. Gone are the paintings of old. They [redacted] replaced by striking pictures of animals dying from oil spills, homelessness, decay, and pollution that have become so much a part of our society today. The band did a bit of experimentation on the release as well as using [redacted] samples. There are some constants here, so old fans don't fret. The band recorded the album once again at Morrisound Studios with the assistance of longtime producer Scott Burns and the CD is lyricless once again, though for the release, John Tardy did have Lyrics for all the songs. Obituary is back with a new release and though they've made some changes, it's all for the better. This release will keep the band at the top of the heap [redacted] one of the premier death metal bands in the world.

REQUIEM a 4-piece New York band that knows how to market themselves. I received a professionally packaged 5 song CD, *Spite*, from the band with a cool inlay as well as lyrics to the songs. The band consists of Joseph Malizia (vocals), Andy Romeo (guitars and programming), James Papa (bass), and Jeff Cicola (drums). When I [redacted] the cover art, I wasn't sure what type of music the band played, so I was interested to hear it. Requiem is a band that plays what I'll call "techno thrash" a la Nine Inch Nails and Ministry. Not being a fan of techno, I couldn't really get totally into any of the songs. I did enjoy the thrash parts in the songs though, these guys are heavy in that department. The songs on the disc are "history-mystery-murder," "78 Death (walking by faith alone)," "Perpetual Threat," "Spite," and "End Over End." All four members are competent musicians and they are good at what they do. From the presentation of the band, I can tell that these guys are serious about their music and promote the band well. If you like the idea of mixing techno and thrash together, Requiem is definitely a band to seek out. They can be reached at: 1454 Dwight Place, Bronx, NY 10465.

While we're in the New York area, one of the finest bands from there, OVERKILL, has their latest release *W.F.O.* available on Atlantic

Records. I'm glad to say these guys are back with a vengeance ■ the follow-up effort to *I Hear Black*. The CD starts off with the song, "Where It Hurts," which is reminiscent of "Elimination," (from Years Of Decay) and continues throughout the rest of the 9 songs with the strength and aggression of ■ huge tidal wave, consuming everything as it goes along. *W.F.O.* is a heavy, intense CD that is ■ homage to vintage 'Kill but also ■ display of the band's progression. This release is a first for the band as they produced it without having Terry Date or Alex Perialas helping to turn the knobs. It is ■ well produced CD, so I guess after doing it for so long, the band knew what was needed to get the sound across to the listener. The lyrics ■ typical Overkill, with titles like the aforementioned "Where It Hurts" (my fave,) "Fast Junkie," "Under One," and "What's Your Problem." Overkill, with this new release, will have many doors flying (as the inlay says) "Wide F**in' Open" for them, welcoming back one of the best thrash bands around today. I recommend that everyone go out and get a copy of the new Overkill - it's one of their best releases as well ■ one of the best of '94.

INTO ANOTHER is ■ area band whose second CD, *Ignaurus*, is out on Revelation Records. I don't know exactly what to make of the band. The inlay of the CD has the members laying ■ a bed together in ■ apartment. I'm not going to ask. Musically, Into Another plays bluesy, alternative metal like Nine Inch Nails but vocalist Richie Birkenhead, reminds me most of Axel Rose of Guns N' Roses with his inflections. A kind of weird mix, don't you think? But ■ works well here as each complements the other. The other three members of the band are Tony Bono (bass), Peter Moses (guitars), and Drew Thomas (drums). The lyrics fit the band well and are colorful in description to read. Into Another are not my cup of tea but if you're one who enjoys listening to bands a little out of the norm, check these guys out. (Revelation Records, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232. I was told that these guys have been signed by Hollywood Records ■ check out this indie release before it's too late.

First came the *Foul Taste Of Freedom* and now the New York band

PRO-PAIN returns to the scene after an almost 2 year absence with their second release on Energy Records called *The Truth Hurts*. The scenes depicted on the cover and inlay reinforce this idea, ■ there are graphic pictures of death. The lyrics ■ also reflective of the album's title as they deal with the problems we face in day to day living. Pro-Pain has two new members since their debut, adding Mike Hollman on rhythm guitar and Nick St. Denis on lead guitar to give the band a new dimension to their sound. *The Truth Hurts* is a lesson in thrashcore. It is definitely a heavier and more diverse release than *Freedom*. The band also decided to do something a little different this time out by asking Ice-T to collaborate with them on the track "Put The Lights Out." Pro-Pain is a band that is trying to open our eyes and see what is around even though we all know that, a lot of times, The Truth Hurts.

For this issue, I'd like to highlight a fanzine that I got at the beginning of the month: *Ill-Literature* (formerly *No Glam Fags*). Issue #8 is available with a full cover photo of Entombed and 104 pages full of great interviews with bands like Entombed, Black Sabbath, My Dying Bride, Cathedral, Morbid Angel ■ well as new bands like Machine Head and Invocator. There's also tons of reviews of signed and unsigned bands along with other zine listings, video reviews and a segment on the Southern California Scene. I highly recommend it if you're interested in finding out what is going on in the underground. (1626 N. Poinsettia Pl. #208, Los Angeles, CA 90046).

Now it's time to tell you about some other releases that I didn't have room to review. Metal Blade has new releases by Fates Warning and Epidemic out now with the new *Mercyful Fate* expected to be out in the next couple of months. Century Media has ■ few bands out now like Demolition Hammer, a split CD with black death metal bands Emperor and Enslaved, and Grave among others with the new *Penance* and Tiamat getting ready to see the light of day in the next few months. Peaceville Records has the ■ Isengard out, he's the lead singer of the black metal band Darkthrone.

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ROADRUNNER

by Hayley Greif

I met the lead singer, Brian, of the band Belial while I was trying to get the photos scanned for my own fanzine. Since I went to school with a couple of the members and the band is based in my area, I was interested in finding out more about them. So without further ado, let me introduce you to the minds of Belial:

Q: Could you give me the name of the band members and what they play?

Tim - I'm Timmy, I play bass.

Ken - I'm Ken, I play guitar.

Brian - I'm Brian, I don't.

T-Bomb - I'm T-Bomb, I play drums.

Q: Could you give a little background on the band? Is this the original lineup?

Ken - No it's not the original lineup. Tim, T-Bomb, and I have been here for a while with Brian joining 8 months ago.

Q: What got each of you into music? How long have you been playing? Has anyone taken lessons or are you self-taught? Have you been in other bands before?

Tim - I started playing in my brother's band because his bass player

was dogging it hardcore. I joined another band, Andromeda, that blew and I began lessons. Basically, I have my own style, I'd like to think.

Ken - I never took lessons. I played in a whole lot of bands, including Andromeda, with Tim and T-Bomb. I've been playing since I was 16.

T-Bomb - I took lessons briefly but I quit. I've been playing for 15 years with time off here and there for good behavior.

Brian - I've been involved in music for most of my life. I feel genuinely compelled to play within music honestly without having to answer to anyone besides myself and the people I'm working with.

Q: How does a Belial song come together? Is it a group effort or do certain people do certain things?

Ken - Usually Tim and I assemble the riffs, present it to T-Bomb and work things out as a unit until everyone is satisfied, then we hit Brian with it. He handles the lyrics and any final arrangements.

Q: What influences you to write? Are you influenced by what is around you?

Band: Weed! Pot! Bud crammings!

Ken - Yes, I know I personally am (influenced by what is around). I've written some of my best stuff while I was in the worst moods. Everything in my life affects it.

Tim - Yea, I'd have to agree with that. State of mind: stoned, sober, happy, sad. It's all in there

BELIAL

NJ smash metal



Brian - I'm presently preoccupied by ~~man's~~ inhumanity towards man and his environment. This self-imposed ceiling on our abilities instigated and vehemently maintained by this cleptocratic oligarchy that ~~we~~ call our government. I think it's a shame but moreso an outrage. However, equally there's ~~so~~ much hope, based on truth that our core remains untainted that I'm beyond inspired to address this fact primarily. Combined with the tidal ~~waves~~ these three guys conjure, it ~~seems~~ most natural.

Q: How do you feel about being from central New Jersey?

Ken - Central Jersey is the armpit of the universe.

Tim - It sucks.

Q: Have you always played thrash metal? What made you decide to play this style of music?

Ken - I remember years ago when the thrash scene first got started, I was 16. Slayer had just released Reign In Blood, Testament and Vio-lence were moving up with their thing. San Francisco in general was doing really well, that got me rolling pretty hard.

Brian - With a prerequisite of smashing intensity...

T-Bomb - That's us. Smash metal.

Brian - ...every song ends up being different. In the spectrum of things ~~is~~ large ~~even~~ though ~~we~~ have a fast break in two different songs, the collective composition dictates that one break simulates braving a tornado while the next song's fast break poses a similarity to ~~a~~ fleet of 18 wheelers out of control.

Q: When you're not playing, what type of music do you listen to?

Tim - Rap, ghetto, death metal, thrash, everything.

T-Bomb - Folk music is questionable.

Ken: I'm going to the blues club tonight. As far as listening though, Primus, Rush, Morbid Angel.

T-Bomb - Pink Floyd, Steely Dan, Primus.

Tim - Yea, Primus and Farside.

Brian - All in all, I like all genres of music. As long as I feel there's the quality of greatness instilled. That the author of the piece would rather part with his/her right leg then not have written it. I'm very fond of classical with mainstays being Shostakovitch, Mozart, and Beethoven. With jazz, it's both Big Band and Swing to contemporary Sade. Blues, delta blues, Rush, and Yes. It goes on and on. The greats.

Q: I have you been compared to any other thrash bands? How do you feel about the comparisons?

Ken - Slayer, Malevolent Creation and Pantera. None of which I see, the comparisons that is. It's ~~been~~ said about Brian's voice, on occasion, that it ~~was~~ similar to the singer of Pantera.

Brian - All I can say is that essentially no man is an island. All people and things influence, to whatever degree, the same. Everyone views life in ~~a~~ relative fashion. It's really our defining attribute that

separates us from all other life ~~we~~ we know it. While ~~the~~ band or bands is big, anyone remotely demonstrative will be pigeonholed inevitably. As far as the known comparisons, I'm flattered to be compared to such bands and personalities.

Q: What are the goals for the band at this time? Have you achieved what you wanted to ~~be~~ far?

Ken - We' ~~ve~~ achieved the minimal levels. We still haven't played live for anyone yet but a solid lineup has been established. We're moving forward constantly and that's ~~the~~ goal in itself.

Q: How do you feel about being from central New Jersey?

Ken - Central Jersey is the armpit of the universe.

Tim - It sucks.

Ken - More pollution is the only way for it to worsen. However, there aren't many bands ~~it's~~ it's easier to stand out.

Q: Do you think you would like to try and make it anywhere else?

Brian - Yes. The entire globe Complete global acknowledgement..

Tim - You can make ~~it~~ anywhere, it's all possible.

Q: Do you have any new songs? What direction ~~are~~ they taking?

Tim - We're writing a lot. Things are taking ~~a~~ new direction...well, not a new direction but we're just writing the way we feel - really good. I don't know. Brian, what would you say?

Q: When you're not playing, what type of music do you listen to?

Tim - Rap, ghetto, death metal, thrash, everything.

T-Bomb - Folk music is questionable.

Brian - I think you're right on the money, man. We're changing constantly so it follows that ~~the~~ art should too. It's ~~a~~ slow change which seems to define that we're happy with each level but others beckon.

Ken - It's nice because the songs never have a preconceived format other than stepping up the aggression factor. It all ~~comes~~ together like building an erector set. A real big erector set.

Q: Where did you produce the demo?

Brian: EM Studios here in Central Jersey, the only place to go, period. It ~~was~~ produced by the band, co-produced by EM One's Bill Whypp, and re-mastered by John Bailcy of ~~the~~ Sound. Now we're reentering the studio with additional material and once again all is being remixed with T-Bomb producing and Bill Whypp at the helm.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to add?

Brian - We're coming! Like the truth and the rising sun, we're coming. We have ~~a~~ 3 song demo for free to anyone who wants a taste, in the interim until an 8 song demo is finished and is being sold everywhere by January 1995. We're playing anywhere with anyone, anytime we can. We're coming! The band would like to hear from any and all people concerning the free demo, show dates, and any opinions on the world. Write us at PO Box 5488, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648.

■ FT WOMEN - "Planned Obsolescence" - Grungy noise rock that works okay ■ ■ come-on for their live show (one of the things a demo tape is supposed to do, I suppose,) since there's tons of energy in evidence and ■ wild take-no-prisoners attitude going ■ all times. But it's all ■ ■ too frenetic and sloppy to just sit and listen to this in ■ sitting. (Wade C., PO Box 3133-CRS, Johnson City TN 37602)

ANCHOR - "A Is For Anchor, D Is For Demo" - A pretty typical indie-type band (although not for Central Jersey, for what that's worth) with two guys in the rhythm section and two gals on guitar and vocals. Unfortunately, this whole tape lacks energy, mostly because of the lead singer (who calls herself Gemstone, which is another problem right there) and her laconic, slightly-out-of-tune style. The music is crisply played and certainly competent, but every cut mopes along with dreary predictability. Charter members of the "We're Not In This To Have Fun" Generation, Anchor is, sad to say, a drag. (19 Mountain View Ave, Long Valley NJ 07853) - Jim T.

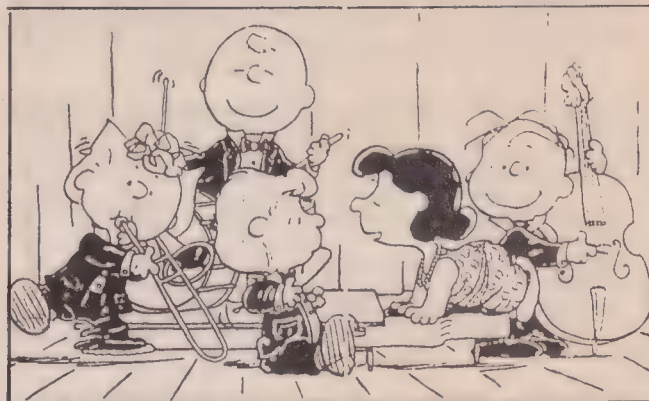
ANTHROPHOBIA - "Renovations" The production is surprisingly good for ■ demo, with Prong and Wraithchild America influences. There ■ ■ some nice changes within the songs, but it's a little too metal for me. (PO Box 6257, Wyomissing PA 19610) - Eric Zoll

I'm not ■ ■ what the Anthrophobes are trying to renovate here. On this self-released cassette, the band kicks out four pretty baseline metallic jams. Frank, Mike, Todd and Dickie Phobia, and lead guitarist Andy Hinds (why wouldn't he take the "Phobia" name, I wonder?) mix crunchy power chord guitars, bursts of flashy lead guitar, thudding rhythms and shouted vocals into ■ riff-heavy, muddy toned soup. I think the "Phobes are going for the kind of bristly punk distilled by the late Mulch or Buzzoven, but on this recording, they just don't have the ferocity to get there. And there's this lurking, I don't know, sort of glam, sort of Van Halenish (!?) flavor that leaves a really bad taste in my mouth. Metallars trying to go punk? Punks on the edge of metal? I'm don't know what they're building, but the renovations ■ ■ apparently going to take a while longer. (Box 6257, Wyomissing PA 19610) -- ■ ■ Gangloff

APPLE-O - "10 Songs"- Well, it's open stage night here ■ Jersey Beat and we have ■ very special guest for you (nervous cough) . . . Apple-O will be playing 10 acoustic songs (not necessarily in key with the vocals)

about awareness, sleep addiction, silence, and others of the like. If I catch anyone throwing things, it's out the door. The "No Refund" policy still applies mind you. So don't even ask. If you have any questions or complaints, ■ ■ the bartender -- I'm leaving. (P.O. Box 311, Island Heights, NJ, 08732) - Greg M.

ASSTROLAND - "Gunfuck'er" - I guess for this is okay for your typical DIY ABC No Rio grindcore demo - it's got the guitars that sound like ■ defective electric blender set on Puree, and vocals that sound like the singer is gargling with Drano, and it's all faster than shit and totally



demo tapes

incomprehensible and annoying as fuck. I saw this band live and they do put on ■ good show though. If you're more inclined to get ■ new tattoo this week than bathe, then I'm sure you'll think this is the shit. (328 Flatbush Ave Box 175, Brooklyn NY 11238) - Jim T.

BODHISATVA - Demo - The ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ comes from Buddhist philosophy



ANCHOR

and means "he whose being is enlightenment," and the presskit talks ■ lot about how the band has found inner peace and ■ "the ■■■■ beatniks" suffering the journey to become saints. So how did I just *know* this ■■■■ going to be funk? Well, it is, mostly, with some prog-rock expansionist ideas opening up the sound a bit, very well produced with high-quality musicianship. Try ■■■■ I might, though, I found this about as enlightening ■ an episode of Kung Fu. (Rob Wcisio, 7 McGinnis Rd, Edison NJ 08817) - Jim T.

CIRCULAR RUIN - "Demo 94" - The note that came with this tape said "We're just a little bullshit band who wants our tape reviewed....and we're ■ bunch of freaks." Sounds to me more like a decent-enough Old School NY hardcore band with a talented guitarist who probably listens to a little too much Metallica. (PO Box 564481, College Point NY 11356) - Jim T.

COMRADES - "A Spectrum of Light" (Vandamarah Ent., 19 Federal St, Clifton NJ 07011) It took about 11 years and multiple band breakups, but finally this collection of melodic punk has arrived. Randy Gaston & Jimmy Williams ■■■ the original members, and Williams' socio-political leanings (he's an ex-Politburo and Positive Alternative member) pop up every once in a while. Other than that, this is good old style punk that I'd like to catch live. - Tom B.

CRIMENY - "Peat" - Heavy power-noisecore with a touch more melody than usual and less growling vocals and more screaming guitars (that last part is a distraction.) All in all, pretty good. (Shrapnel Records, PO Box P, Novato CA 94948) - Jamie T.

DIMESTORE DARLINGS - "Sunrise Semester" - You know that Gin Blossom's song, "Hey Jealousy," the one you can't stop humming even though it has that sort of countryish quality and you really *hate* country, but you just really like that one song anyway? Well, imagine four songs just like that - catchy, friendly, ■ little bit country but with just enough of ■ punk-rock kick to make them stick in your head and get your toes a'tappin'. Play this first thing in the morning and you'll leave the house with ■ smile on your face. And I am anxiously awaiting more from this band. (20 Murray St #5, New York NY 10007) - Jim T.

ENDZONE - "Punt" - An album-quality cassette from Allentown, PA, ■ notorious redneck burg infamous for its nazi skinheads. So I have to commend Endzone for working ■ many black musical influences into their music, which is almost equal parts hardcore, rap, and funk. The problem is that it's all pretty generic, no matter what genre they're borrowing from, and the lyrics ■■■ hardly progressive - lots of stuff about driving fast cars, ogling naked wimmin, and bein' ■ beer-guzzlin', white trash rebel, just the sort of thing that frat boys who party to the Chili Peppers and Beastie Boys go nuts for. Well, Rome wasn't built in a day. (PO Box 8806, Allentown PA 18105) - Jim T.

FUN GIRLS FROM MT. PILOT - "Hi Doll!" - The semi-legendary Rednecks In Pain that once roamed the streets of Nashville have been outdone by, of all people, the Fun Girls from Mt. Pilot. Playing supercharged hardcore, these four women have made quite an impression in the jeans of many a near-sighted punk rocker. Hi Doll! features such high-tootin' hits as 'Your Girlfriend Hates Me,' 'Billy Dee Williams,' and the crowd-teasing 'Cookie.' This band is ■ must-see when you ■■■ ready to sneak away and party with the wild floosies from the big city. A word of advice: Don't ask them to play 'Salty Dog.' It makes them cry. (House O' Pain, P.O. Box 120861, Nashville, TN, 37212) - Greg M.

HEDGE - Demo - This Hoboken band falls into that metal/funk/rap crossover genre, although the four tunes on this tape are more metal than anything else, and more heavy than hip hop. (% Kevin Aquino, 422 Adams St, Hoboken NJ 07030)

HUMAN PREY - Although production and music theoretically should be judged separately, this jumbled mess won't even let me hear the instruments. It's kind of like trying to swim through mud to hear the melodies. From what I could discern, it's supposed to be heavy rock ala' Helmet minus the bass. Nothing too interesting, but I did like the gruff and gritty vocals. (4781 N Hillary Duel, Richmond Hts OH 44143) - Jamie T.

I.D.K. - Demo - Solid garage rock, it reminded ■ a bit of the old Blisters, a NJ mainstay for many years. This has ■ slightly harder, more "modern-metal" sound than most of the Replacements-damaged demos I used to get, probably because kids today graduate from Metallica instead of Kiss before they get into punk. (PO Box 302, Ridgefield NJ 07657) - Jim T.

JACK SHRED DESTRUCTION CO. - Demo - While I ■ the world's biggest supporter of DIY, I also believe in the concept of Doing It Yourself *Well* - which doesn't mean recording ten songs on a boombox in your bedroom. The shitty sound makes the harsh vocals almost unlistenable, but under the buzz and murk this sounds like ■ fairly driving metallic hardcore band, and since this demo was meant to promote their Summer, ■■ tour, it probably did its job, since anyone into hardcore would probably think about going to their show after ■ whiff of this. (3364 Helix St, Spring Valley CA 91977) - Jim T.

KATZENJAMMER - "Pandora's Box" - Definitely geared towards ■ "alternative" crowd. Self-described "moody poeticness"... ugh. But although it's overly repetitive and not really my cup o' java, it's not all that bad. It's a repetitive rock background (with hints of punk and classic rock?!?) with out-front folk vocals. There's also a weird jazzy thing that starts to sound sort of like a cross between Phish and Dinosaur Jr. I suppose with a better recording job, ■ might be good. They should practice, hone down their songs, and they wouldn't be half bad. They should have saved money on the foldout and paid for a better recording. (Katzenjammer; 410 E. Watawga Ave.; Johnson City, TN 37601) - Matt R.

LEISURE HIVE - "Constant Motion" - A gothic/industrial/college-radio friendly band with a female vocalist. Basically, this sounds like a lot of early 80's New Wave records I never listen to anymore. (Eggplant Productions, 210 Thompson St #2AN, NY NY 10012) - Jim T.

LEAPFROG - "Pesadilla" Lots of energy on this rough-hewn homemade demo. Like ■ lot of ■■■ bands these days, Leapfrog combine elements of hardcore thrash with samples, hip hop beats, and funk riffs, and ■■ what I assume is a drum machine for percussion (the tape cover says "Your mother on drums.") It's kickin' stuff, though, tasty enough to get me out to ■■ them live. (1434 43rd St, North Bergen NJ 07047) - Jim T.



THIRSTY

MILL VALLEY TATERS - "Garaged" - Catchy ■■■■■ instrumentals - ■ little surf, a little rock, ■■■ old tv theme trash-rock, and ■ dash of B52's. Still, do I need ■ whole tape of new-wave instrumentals? I don't think so. (426 Highland Ave, Stratford CT 06497) - Jim T.

MORNING SHAKES - "Stomach Full of Blood" - This reminds me of old Buttholes and Feederz, with twanging guitars and the mic ■■■■ screeching about wanting to get high. So of course it caught my attention from the get go. Then the Shakes breezed through many other equally fun numbers with ■ dash of Cramps thrown in for good measure. Bravo to the Morning Shakes, their rockin' tunes, and their "who gives ■ shit about anything" attitude. Good stuff. (147 Franklin St #4, Brooklyn NY 11222) - Jamie T.

NOISE MUSEUM - "I Love You Alice B Toklas" - Here's the scoop: begin with dull intro, then proceed with very Yo La Tengo-influenced strumming stuff. Actually I hate to criticize this band because they seem ■ sincere, and it's really not all that bad. A decent effort. (Cripes Records, Box 223, Pt Republic NJ 08241) - Jamie T.

ONE NATURE - My favorite demo of the year, by far. This young band from around the New Brunswick ■■■■ pours so much energy, emotion, melody, and spunk into every one of the 10 songs on this tape that I found myself playing it over and over and over. They're one of those groups that fall in-between genres - a little too melodic for emo, too poppy for hardcore, and they rock too hard to fit into the pop/punk thing. They're also ■ amazing live band. Highly recommended. (PO Box 253, Bound Brook NJ 08805) - Jim T.

OURS - "Sour" - This album-length tape showcases lead singer James Francis, and I must say that a voice like this does not come along often among club bands. He has a strong, commanding mid-range, an exquisite falsetto, and can convey ■■ impressive range of emotions. The vocals dominate all 13 cuts on this cassette, which range from gothic ("Dracula's Bride") to lite-metal power ballads to ■ few poppier numbers. When everything clicks, Francis' grandly emotive vocals recall Bono Vox, but there's a thin line between emotional and melodramatic and ■ the band's cheesier tunes, Francis sounds more like a male Pat Benatar than anything else. (Mike Marri, 280 Boulevard, New Milford NJ 07646) - Jim T.

PIE - Rock n roll with just ■ bit of fire thrown in here ■ there. Mellow parts of this release are further downgraded by the singer's dull, expressionless voice. These guys ■■■■ to think a lot of themselves, and back to those mellow parts. Laughable is the only word I ■■■■ think of... (37 Rogers Ave, 1st Fl, W Somerville MA 02144) - Jamie T.

PLANK - "Step" - I'm not ■ enormous fan of this ■■■■ hardcore/rap hybrid thing but as far ■ it goes, Plank is not a bad example of the genre. The four songs on this tape have what sounds like ■■ authentic urgency, sticking much closer to the stripped-down guitar sound (with bouncy melodic bass lines) of emo/core than the heavy metal bombast of groups like Mutha's Day Out or Life Of Agony. (PO Box 88, Roland PA 19330) - Jim T.

PLASTIC FANTASTIC LOVER - This ■■■■ four-song demo rehashes the garagey rave-up "MTV" (from PFL's first tape,) adds ■ cover of Donna Summers' "Hot Stuff" (which suggests the world isn't quite ready for garage-disco,) and ends with a Syd Barrettish psychedelic tune called "I'm In Love" recorded on 8 track. Roll over, Mono Man, and tell Roky Erickson the news: Garage rock lives. (89 Godwin Ave, Elmwood Pk NJ 07407) - Jim T.

RADIO I CHING - "Emo's Choice" This SoCal band reminds me a lot of Hoboken's Tiny Lights, in that they have a female lead singer and cover ■ wide range of 60's influenced styles. Some of the numbers have a Deadhead jazzy psychedelic-jam vibe, others have a feisty Janis Joplin kick, and a few of the harder tunes (including, inexplicably, the first song on the tape) fall dangerously close to cheese-metal, redolent of hairspray and spandex. The band really rises or falls on the

strength of Holly Hebert's ■■■■ vocals. She comes on a little too strong for my taste but fans of mainstream hard rock and anybody in the whole H.O.R.D.E. thing should like this band just fine. (Graphic Sound Records, PO Box 24, Venice CA 90291) - Jim T.

RYE - "The Dancing Man" - : Really fast guitars and drums, ■ singer who sounds like he's having ■ nervous breakdown, mock-ironic lyrics - it reminds me of Nation of Ulysses (or one of their countless imitators) without the spazzcore jazz influences, and while I don't question the band's sincerity or the emotion on this tape, personally I prefer to listen to music that sounds more like entertainment and less like sonic psychotherapy. (PO Box 1231, Secaucus NJ 07096) - Jim T.

SHYSTER, SHYSTER & FLYWHEEL - "Sir Pretty Ass" - Maybe it's not SS&F's fault that today's music ■■■■ is flood with this type of guitary postpunk junk, with just ■ hint of dissonance to make it all easier for alternatypes to swallow. Maybe it isn't their fault, but they ■■■■ aren't doing much to stand out in ■ quickly tiring genre. (158 Triangle St, Danbury CT 06810) - Jamie T.

SICK BOYS - "Bar Fly" demo - From the nice presskit they sent along, it ■■■■ this is ■ really young band (just out of high school) who play ■ lot of shows in their hometown, but just the fact that they could put together ■ nice presskit coming a town called St. Catharines, Ontario, says ■ lot for their pluck. Musically, they are heavily indebted to the Clash, including the ska, rockabilly, and rudeboy influences, but they play



ONE NATURE

everything with so much boyish enthusiasm, it almost doesn't matter how unoriginal this is. With ■ certain kind of rock n roll, that no longer becomes the point. What matters is heart, which these Sick Boys wear on the sleeves of their leather jackets in abundance. (57 Leaside Dr, St Catharines ONT. CANADA L2M 4G1) - Jim T.

SOUND ADVICE - 4 Song Demo - Tight, well-produced jingle rock whose soundtotally reminds me of the Counting Crows or Live. Feeling moody and wanting to drown in self-loathing? Pick up the great new demo by Sound Advice. - Greg M.

SPELLCASTERS - 2-song Demo - I just happened to wander into a show by this young Hoboken trio and ■■■ totally, well, spellbound. Wonderfully melodic punk and I bet they haven't ■■■ heard half the bands they remind me of, but just for the record: Big Star, Chris Stamey, Velvet Crush, Gigolo Aunts... And their presskit is really funny too. Big things await. Write it down, you read it here first. (PO Box 3504, Hoboken NJ 07030) - Jim T.

STITCHWORK - "94 Demo" - This is total deathmetal done exceptionally well, from the quality of the production to the chugga-chugga fretwork to the truly spooky Satanic vocals. I mean, it really sounds like Satan singing this stuff. If these kids ■■■ from Clearwater, FL instead of South Jersey, they'd be on tour with Sepultura this very minute. (Jerry Franklin, 53 Knollwood Dr, Tinton Falls NJ 07724) - Jim T.

THIRSTY - First demo - The name is cool but nothing musically groundbreaking here. There seems to be a Bouncing Souls influence. Sorta poppy, which is nice for an East Coast band, but they would definitely sound better with ■ guitarist instead of trying to get by with just bass and drums. (see next review for address)

THIRSTY - "Sometimes I Fall In Love Too Easily" - Goofy lo-fi basement-recordings from ■ wacky duo of Jersey guys. ■ you don't mind the homemade recording quality and are into weird, silly stuff like Ween, you'll probably get ■ chuckle or two from songs like "401 Main St. Delicatessen,"

"Lost My Pants," and the band's tribute to the lead singer of the Queers, "Joe Queer." (Pancake Dave, Hood Hall Rm 106, Ithaca College, 953 Danby Rd, Ithaca NY 14850) - Jim T.

THOMAS HINDSIGHT - "Warmed Up For The Letdown" - Now this is the kind of surprise I like - a NY band I've never heard of that sends me ■■■ absolutely killer demo. In fact, these five songs are a lot better than 98% of the major label shlock I've gotten this summer. Warm, intelligent, nicely crafted pop songs - in a style influenced by, although not really similar to, the Replacements - about relationships and life. Tom Peditto, whose band this is, has a nice voice, a little raspy but capable of tightly wound Beach Boys-like harmonies. Yet he can also carry harder rockin' numbers like the opening cut, "Symptomatic." He has a nice way with words too; the lyrics ■■■ full of clever phrases that fit snugly into Peditto's concise but catchy hooks. With talent like Kevin Salem and this guy roaming the streets of NY, you wonder how annoyingly boring nobodies like Bobby Sichran and Jeff Buckley wind up with the major label contracts. (Tom Peditto, 176 E. 3rd St #5C, New York NY 10009) - Jim T.

TOAST - Even though the insert photo is pretty lame, the music on this demo is not by any means. This is a unique blend of folksy guitars, repeated hooks, and jumpy rhythms that branch off into sugar-sweet passages with swell vocals. I'm really grooving to this one. An address on the tape would have been nice, though. - Jamie T.

US ■ THEM - This is a solo project from guitarist Andy Hinds, onetime member of the Shakes and current guitarist for Anthrophobia. This four-songs combine a sort of twisted-pop approach (like the Cure with ■ flanger and ■ wah-wah fixation) with Perry Farrell-esque vocals that stop just short of being too quirky to deal with. Hinds wrote, sang, played, and recorded everything on the tape on ■ home 4-track. Impressive, indeed, if not exactly my cup of tea. (165 Silver Springs Rd, Phoenixville PA 19460) - Jim T.

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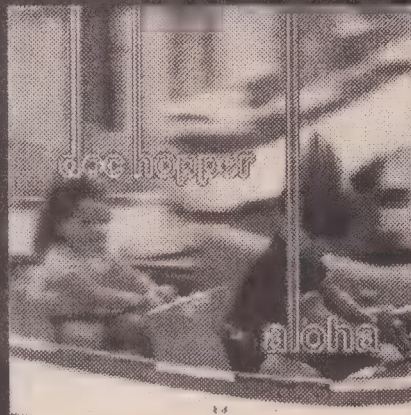
-Glut



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-The Noise



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Ear
Records**

Yeah, I was fixin' to do my whole joint this time around, seeing how y'all obviously have interest in the not-so-corporate side of music, on hip hop fanzines, and the growing culture thereof; but I started going thru my recent stacks o' wax, demos, and CDs and yo, there's some phat shit coming out this fall, and summer has been a joke, so I got's ta let y'all know and maybe not get as in-depth with the underground press.

So let's get to it...

Anyone heard the new SLICK RICK joint, featuring Warren G? Ya best recognize him cux hip hop's #1 storyteller is back with some straightup Slick Rick STYLE. No divergences from the flow, just the shit we love, and this time around he laments his plight in prison, service his sentence for the 1990 shooting of his cousin. Word has it that the Immigration Service plans to deport Rick back to his native England at the end of his term. Fans who would like to write in support of Rick and show the INS what he really means to the hip hop nation can write to INS c/o Gucci, 566 Myrtle Ave, Brooklyn NY 11205.

The DEATH ROW camp should be busy this fall with releases slated from LADY OF RAGE and the DR. DRE/ICE CUBE collaboration, *Helter Skelter*. Rage's album is said to have tracks by not only Dre, but Gangstarr's DJ PREMIER. The flyest female rapper with the two flyest producers in the business? I can't even fathom.

Speaking of DJ Premier, folks in the NY area can catch him mixing live every Friday night on The Vibe 107.5 FM, WBLS opposite DJ Evil Dre from Black Moon's slot on HOT 97. Of course as long as we're giving props to hip hop radio, can't forget the STRETCH ARMSTRONG SHOW hosted by BOBBITO every Thursday night from 1-5 am at WKCR 88.9, where you'll hear all the butter joints and get all the phat scoops first.

This living in New York shit kinda has me open...

Ummm, ah! For you Jersey heads, you're definitely gonna check the ARTIFACTS, Big Beat Records' next big thing. I first peeped the tech(nique) in early '93 on a quick visit to NYC and was duly impressed by their complete package: Presence, lyrics, flow, and a genuine love for their hip hop culture and roots make the Artifacts a saving grace of sorts, right alongside NAS and JERU, only with less props. Their first single, "Wrong Side Of Da Tracks," provides the listener with only a taste of the flavor, as they pay the ultimate homage to graffiti writing, a vital yet generally slept on aspect of hip hop culture. The Artifacts paint vivid soundscapes as they expound upon the virtues of rhyming, breakdancing, giving up respect where it's due (like: "to the store that sells three Phillies for a dollar, to Afrika Bambaata for making me a rap scholar") and just leaving no stone unturned as far as representing every aspect of the hip hop culture. Hailing from the Sixth Boro, Newark NJ, *Between A Rock And A Hard Place* is my recommended purchase of the issue.

Also from Jersey, I got to peep a cut from the new REDMAN joint called "Smokas Blunt Too," as in the kind of funk you smoke a blunt to, and word up. Redman is in there once again, kid.

MOBB DEEP is back and their self-produced first single for Loud/RCA (under the direction of Source magazine's Matty C), "Shook Ones," is an ambient, almost evil type track that works

the psyche to complete attention as the duo, Prodigy and Havoc, rhyme about their lives in the Queensbridge housing projects and "the most violent of the violentest crimes we give life to, if these Queensbridge kids don't like you." A far cry from "Hit 'Em From The Back," tho that kind of had me open too.



By Madd Matt Sonzala

Look for the bulk of the album to be self-produced, with maybe a few tracks from DJ Premier from the last session thrown in.

As far as the New Music Seminar went this year, on, but no one, represented like BAD BOY ENTERTAINMENT. Talk about flooding the market, everywhere you'd go, you'd get a constant reminder that Bad Boy, with their latest gems CRAIG MACK and the NOTORIOUS B.I.G., are poised to blow the fuck up. Signs, stickers, kids with bullhorns, all pumping the shit outta the aforementioned artists, but no showcase by either, which was certainly a disappointment.

The phattest part of the Seminar this year had to be the PAYDAY showcase with SHOWBIZ & AG, UTD, MOP, JERU THE DAMAJA. Make no bones about it, Jeru got one of the hypest shows I've seen in a while. He, along with AFU RA, LIL DAP, and MALACHI THE NUTCRACKER, and yes, DJ Premier on the one and two, had me actually throwing my hands in the air and buggin out the whole time. Most artists can barely peel me from the bar, but these cats rocked shit. Be on the lookout for UTD, which stands for Urban Thermo Dynamics, representing the Brackattack like no other before them, and keeping everything real. Set to just pop out of the woodwork and blast you with some hip hop.

This year's SUPERMEN INC. DJ and MC battles were pretty much wack as far as I could see. None of the MCs really displayed all that much originality and many didn't even have battle rhymes. JUDGEMENTAL from Chicago took the title this year with the RULA SON DULA (aka King Sun) taking a close

second. Dula was the only one that really even battled and except for the occasional diss thrown host Doctor Dre's way, was the only MC that was the least bit entertaining.

The DJ battle was a little better, but there certainly were no DJ SCRATCH's or West Coast ROCK STEADY DJ's in it this year. DJ NOISE from Denmark took the title and actually did begin to heat up as the finals approached, but he along with the rest provided mediocre (at best) routines for the bulk of the prelims.

Uh, anyone up for a BRAND NUBIAN reunion? Haa!

Didn't get to catch the BEASTIE BOYS and TRIBE CALLED QUEST on this year's Lollapalooza tour and I can't say I'm heartbroken. Why can't folks put together a Lollapalooza Of Rap and make that shit worth the price of admission, instead of throwing two or three accessible (no matter how dope they are) hip hop acts in the midst of nine crappy alternative groups. Tell me a Beastie Boys, Tribe, Pharcyde, Souls Of Mischief, Artifacts, Hard 2 Obtain, Jeru, Nas, Organized Konfusion, Alkaholiks, Brand Nubian tour wouldn't be the bomb. No hard rocks, just hip hop. No long hairs, just hip hop. Shiiiiit. Dream on.

ORGANIZED KONFUSION, after practically two years delay, have returned with *Stress: The Extinction Agenda*, on Hollywood Basic Records. Let me be the first to put you on, since I've mentioned the delays on this album in my last couple columns, the shit is in there kid. Taking the notion of being abstract to that next level, Prince Poetry and Pharoah Monch weave intricate rhyme patterns over some of the wildest beats you've heard in a while. Check the "Stress" remix, featuring LARGE PROFESSOR - "Why you try to play though, out like a sucka and hey..." is the hook of the year.

Those still stuck on the first Organized outing surely remember the brother dem call O.C. from the posse ctt, "Fudge Pudge," and have probably been wondering since what's become of him. Well, he turned up on MC SERCH's "Back To The Grill" remix, and now in '94 he's finally coming solo with a phat single on Wild Pitch Records called "Time's Up," as in time's up for all the gangsta wannabe posturing and nonsense flooding the rap game.

Speaking of nonsense, I hear Death Row fucked up the JACK THE RAPPER convention again. Chill.

So much happening in the world of hip hop, it's hard to keep up. Lucky for us, there's a handful of self-starters out there coming with some butter fanzines to keep all interested in the know... *THE BOMB* is a xeroxed mag out of the Bay area with contributors from all over the hip hop nation. *The Bomb* features news, classic reviews, up to date interviews, charts, video reviews, and graffiti, and is one of my favorites. Write David Paul, 4104 24th St #105, San Francisco CA 94114.

GRAND ROYAL is assembled and put out by the Beastie Boys whenever they feel like it. Seriously witty and available from PO Box 26689, Los Angeles CA 90026. *ONE NUT NETWORK* is more of an industry update type thing with great writing and up-to-the-minute scoops on artists and industry heads; get down with them at PO Box 26722, West Haven CT 06516. *BEAT DOWN* opts for a newspaper-type format, much like the west coast's *Rap Sheet*, and definitely has a little something going

on. Tons of news, reviews, and features on everything from censorship, graffiti, and artists new & classic, charts and all that good shit. PO Box 1266, New York NY 10274.

4080 is a glossy mag with a color cover also representing the Bay Area in fine form. All the basics and cool layouts, get in touch - 2005 Parker St, Berkeley CA 94704. For some great writing, interesting twists on hip hop, alternative, and the like, check New York's "free guide to hip musical styles," *EGO TRIP*. It's one of the best - PO Box 2328, Astoria NY 11102. And finally, from our Molson guzzling buddies north of the border comes *PROP\$* magazine, outta Vancouver, which carries a healthy amount of Canadian hip hop for a nice change of pace, and sets them apart from the pack. - 6657 Broadway East, Vancouver BC CANADA V5B 2Y6.

The deadline for showcase submissions to this year's South By Southwest Music Media Conference in Austin, TX is November 15. Last year's rap showcase was type large with the Gravediggas doing their first show, MAD FLAVA, the BLACMONKS, and a wealth of talent. Hosted by RAPSHEET and yours truly, next year's can only get bigger. Call Andre Walker at (512) 443-0998 to get in there.

Yeah so, in closing, I gotta send extra love love shout outs to the Funky Position Crew, Don Scavone, Beef Sausage, Heads N Dreads, Dorsey Fuller and Darryl James a Rapsheet, Sociopath Left, and all those fine females roaming the streets of Clinton Hill. I'm out like those drawers you be wearin'. PEACE.

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This has been ■■ intriguing period for this column. Some confusion, at least on my part, about the title and format change. Formerly *Cassette Culture*, ■■ now bring you music on the quiet side, in ■■ formats. Relax and enjoy. We still enjoy receiving cassette-only submissions and will review them in other parts of this zine. Keep those cards and letters coming...CD's too! Rod Leighton, RR3, Pugwash Nova Scotia, Canada B0K 1L0.

The Carpetbaggers: "Nowhere To Go But Down" (Clean Records) I have a feeling this is also ■■ CD but they sent me a tape. Growing up, ■■ these many millenia, my mother always watched a program called Country Hoedown or something like that. One of the featured acts was a trio known as The Rhythm Pals...Johnny, Jack, and Mark, who played guitar, violin, and stand up bass. Everybody sang, changing lead to suit the best voice for the tune. Other than the fact that Rich, John, and Mike of the Carpetbaggers could be the Pals' grandsons, their music is ■■ bit more uptempo but it sure reminds me of listening to the Rhythm Pals. At 42 minutes, it's ■■ good dose of rockin' sockin' rockabilly, and a very good release.

Christine Wall - "Kittenbush" (Zenith Beast Prod., PO Box 191671, San Francisco CA 94119) Christine is a gal with a beautiful voice, a passion for pussies...the four-legged kind, get yr mind out of the gutter! ... and a desire to be either a pop star or a librarian, which seems like a weird combination at first but makes perfect ■■■■ when you think about it. I hope she becomes a pop star so I will have more opportunities to listen to her lovely, fascinating renditions of humorous, socially conscious pop. Four of the 5 songs on this EP were written by production guy Larry O. Dean, who helps out with background music along with three others. Extremely promising artists with ■■ beautiful voice. Encourage her all you can!

What Is Right (Powercoat Records, Box 1791, Bensalem PA 19020) This is an important project, ■■ collaboration between Civil Allen and Phantom Phorty which produced this 4-song cassette. Each side has ■■ song by Allen and an instrumental by PP. The title cut is all about the horror and agony of seeing small children suffering with AIDS. The entire tape is devoted to the subject of pediatric AIDS and is ■■ powerful, emotive release. To the immense credit of everyone involved (Phantom Phorty is Allen and three anonymous but well-known Philly-area musicians), 70% of the proceeds from this project will benefit pediatric AIDS research and the rest will go to continuing this non-profit effort. At three bucks a copy, every single person reading this should be able to afford at least ■■ cassette. It's good music and an extremely valuable project. Buy copies for all your friends and relatives this Christmas and help support this worthy cause!

Ira Drysdale - "Precious Memories" (PO Box 249, Wallace NS Canada B0K 1Y0) Yesterday I went and bought some pepperoni and found that my butcher had recorded ■■■■ of his solos at St. Matthews Presbyterian Church with his wife Nancy. This tape captures fourteen all-time favorite hymns like "Amazing Grace." Mum says it's great. This is a good opportunity to obtain some good church music and ■■ small sample of rural Nova Scotia at the ■■■■ time.

I received another package from Bismark Productions, the demo studio/production facility/rehearsal space in Jersey City overseen by the ambitious Joseph Clipper, who hopes to conquer the world, one demo tape at a time. For any of the following, write to Bismark Productions, PO Box 5253, Jersey City NJ 07305.

Peculiar Child - "Crack" demo - The liner notes credit Lisa Young with "Nipples." Hmm. Lisa, Clipper, and Blaise do ■■ half dozen tunes; five of them are sort of punk-rock growly and didn't excite me too much. "Fairies Wear Boots" is a cute, humorous, fun tune with Lisa on lead vocals.

Clipper - "Steady" demo - Good old raunchy rock n roll. Well done. Sex and love lyrics. Good songs, well sung and well played. What more needs to be said?

Out Of Oz - "Retch" demo - Aw, it ain't that bad! This group has added

Brian Ramsey on bass and changed their style ■■ bit since the last tape I heard. Or maybe just expanded their horizons. Screaming primal noise on some cuts, one tune that's ■■■■ rock, and one that almost fits the concept of this column!

Clipper - "The Mother Of Black Holes" - Spoken word, samples, mostly political commentary. Didn't do ■■ thing for me.

The Hudson City Scene - This is a zine that Bismark Prod. puts out, free of course, with collages of poetry, ads, reviews, pictures. One of the issues I got had a thoughtful editorial on the fall of the music industry by Clipper, and a great little essay by James Scott wondering if sex is ■■ addiction. Another issue had reprints from *Jersey Beat* and *Betty Pagnated*, and another issue reprinted Jim Testa's meditation on Kurt Cobain's death from *The Jersey Journal*.

The Quiet Corner

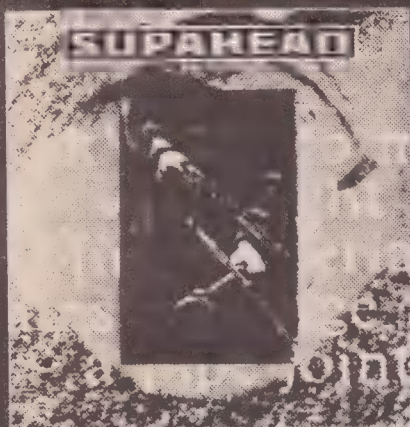
by Rodney Leighton

A compilation tape of various songs by members of the Bismark family, plus spoken word from Chris, Pat, and Lisa. A good way to know the groups, although I've heard better songs from most of them

Tom Chapin - *So Nice To Come Home* (Sundance Music, Box 1663, NYC 10013. Perhaps my favorite song of all time ■■ "Cat In The Cradle" by Tom's brother Harry Chapin. This Chapin continues in that tradition with "Always Gone," a song about being on the road ■■ lot. This guy has been around ■■ long time, hosting tv programs, recording children's songs. He's got an entire page of career highlights dating back to 1965. This is very good folk music, in the tradition of Woody Guthrie. Great stuff, easy to listen to and enjoyable. The ballad "The ■■■■ Beast ■■ Barbie" is almost worth the price of the CD alone, and "Pass The Music On" has a wonderful sentimental appeal.

Jehova Waitresses - *Perfect Impossible* (Shimmy Disc) Linda Roy's voice reminds me somewhat of early Chrissie Hynde, like a little girl who's not exactly happy but not quite pissed off. Hubby Kevin has a darker, angrier sound, while Alan Grandy is, well, Alan Grandy, the king of Ohio pop and ■■■■ to be America. The 11 tunes here are intricately interwoven with the various lead vocals and stylizing to keep the listener well entertained, while simultaneously keeping you on your mental toes to see what ■■■■ next. And then Janice Fields pops up with her violin and piano. Go find yourself ■■ copy!

The Rosehips - *Soul Veronique In Parchment* (3734 ■■ Pine Grove #301, Chicago IL 60613) In what is becoming ■■ notable change of pace, this album opens with ■■ song I love. Suitably, it's ■■ beautifully performed love song, pop-ballad style. The Rosehips were once known ■■ the Mystery Girls. The promo sheets contains a complaint by lead singer Kevin



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Junior that they were always compared to the Stones; I can see why. The entire album dips and swoops from bluesy ballads to pure pop to near-metal. There's a total acoustic bit on one cut, plus a little piano and sitar. They sound destined for mainstream success.

Miles Dethmuffin - *Clutter* (PO Box 390149, Cambridge MA 02139) The bassist and vocalist in this quartet is named Linda Bean P. and I like her voice. Lyrics on most of these songs are fun and meaningful. "You knew what color my sleeping bag was, and these cads won't forgive me 'cause you're not sleeping with me," from "Sleeping Bag." "Hurt On" seems to be a diatribe against religious crusaders, with lyrics like, "He says you can't have anything/and he's really really starting to piss me off." It's social commentary that's fun to listen to, but don't let the humor supersede the message. A good one.

Kowtow Popof - *Songs From The Pointless Forest* (PO Box 215, Rockville MD 20848) I'm having a helluva time convincing myself to take this one out of the CD player! At first spin, the first couple of cuts had me thinking this guy was a one-man band David Bowie clone. However, I decided that this lad had a better voice, with ranges Bowie could only dream of. The tunes run along on a nice gentle pop rhythm, and then suddenly pop or sometimes drop into grunge-punk grooves. Not a release which grabs you by the balls at first listen but I challenge anyone to hear it at least three times and not rate it very highly - especially if you enjoy basically quiet music.

Jack Tannehill - *Greatest Hits* (Buy Or Die, 174 Main St, Hackettstown NJ 07840) A young man with an affinity for Hank Williams and Joe Cocker. Then again, that may just be his natural voice and singing style. My original take on this was "Leonard Cohen-type folk songs sung with a Joe Cocker swagger" but that may be a disservice to a singer-songwriter who's working to establish his own identity.

Trailside Rangers - *Peacemaker* (Jericho Hill Records, 230 W 82 St #4A, NYC 10024) Head dude Joe Wilford (songwriter, vocalist) emigrated from Iowa to NYC in 1985 and was joined there by fellow Iowan Duane Larson. This band finally fell together in 1991. This four song release is too long to call an EP (at least I think it is, at nearly 19 minutes) but I thoroughly enjoyed it, and if this band played anywhere near where I live, I would go see them.

Cryptic Soup - "Salty Pretzel Dog Logic" (PO Box 7613, NYC 10150) I don't understand why they used a photo of a poor old dead dog on this release but that's the only complaint I have about this delightful 14-song CD, which comes with a bonus 5-song EP entitled "Roy's Dunkin' Hut." "A Certain Girl..." is a great pop/rock song, but much care seems to have gone into making every cut here a musical gem, using many different instruments and stylings (including The Institutional Radio Choir on the beautiful, hymn-like ballad "Please Let Me Hold You A Little Tighter.") This goes on the "keep forever" stack!

Roadside Banditos - *Rock N Roll Trenches* (Gorgeous Music, Box 6026, Hoboken NJ 07030) Half a dozen guys doing the sort of rock n roll which is mostly love-song ballads, closer to country than hard rock, with lots of rockabilly and blues touches. Cute songs, well done, and fun to listen to. "Weehawken Woman" is sort of a tribute, but not really... you know, great looking babe who gets guys all excited and then dumps them. I'm sure Jim knows hundreds of them.

Daniel Yakut - *Bound To Go* (Bodega Mgmt, Box 1115, NYC 10009) I've listened to this young man sing his dozen original soft-rock songs about four or five times now, while finishing my latest Nero Wolf novel and various other stuff, and haven't heard anything that's really grabbed me. On the other hand, I could leave the thing in the CD player the rest of the day without feeling any pain.

Formaldehyde Blues Train - *Dig* (Chasm, 485 12 St, Brooklyn NY 11215) Super cool liner notes, with a full color "Black Cat BBQ" and comix montage. Some very good bluesy folk/rock, with strong humorous currents. A very consistent CD, all 11 cuts are good, easy, and enjoyable.

Industrial Teepee - "Hymns For The Civil Savage" (Box 1229 NYC 10276) This group performs like Barenaked Ladies, in that they sing in an easy listening mode for a stanza or two, and then suddenly go pure power-punk, and then back again. I was quite surprised to read there are only four guys in the band; they make it sound like more. The songs are poetic, humorous short stories: "I was taken for a ride/the whole time I thought I was driving."

The Fourteenth Floor - *Circus, Saints & Sinners* (PO Box 34232, Cleveland OH 44134) Three guys named Tapajna and a couple more dudes, with Janice Fields of Jehovah Waitresses guesting on three cuts. How can I describe this eclectic release? They Might Be Giants falling into a time machine and going back to 1800's Ireland to sing some sea chantys, then hopping a freighter to Poland for some polkas and then returning to the present via early 20th Century Native American folk dances... And finding Lou Reed waiting to produce them when they finally get home? An enjoyable release to put on while peeling squash or doing income tax returns.

Steve Ellis - *Pleasures Of The Past* (Steam Records, 1114 Ave of Americas 16 Fl, NYC 10036) A Billy Joel-like album. Ellis, a plumber by trade and all of 23 years old, wrote these dozen songs, which are a bit varied but could be consistently and easily described as college pop.

Professor And Maryann - *Fairy Tale* (Bar None Records) The Professor is Ken Rockwood, who writes, sings, and plays guitar; Maryann is Danielle Brancaccio, who contributes some evocative vocals. On the cover, they look like a mid-level businessman and a street waif. They play, quote, In every dingy, roach-infested backalley flea bag watering hole in New York City, and have sort of a 60's blues, jazz, soul mix, updated to the 90's. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to this.

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DANSE ASSEMBLY (c.94 DAP): V.O.1.

BABYLAND "A Total Letdown" (Flipside-CD) The CA electro-thrash dynamic-duo are at it again and their new offering, "A Total Letdown," well, in ■ word: isn't. I don't know if it's their sound that's growing on me (like a fungus,) or that while I don't ever expect 'em to do ■ mid-tempo cut, they actually are doing just ■ few of them. That is when they're not up to their usual h/c tricks by foolin' ya into ■ 120-something BPM dansegroove then slammin you with their trademark cuttime synth thrash. With "Worst Case Scenario," they've ■ nifty hip-hop oil-drum groove that's got me thinkin: Beastie Boys meets Neubaten & A BigBlack-esq cover of a Chills cut (even!)

CLOCK DVA "Collective" (Cleopatra-CD) A carefully constructed sampling of C-DVA's electro-output from 88-93. From their haunting, hypnotic material ("Hacker/ Sound Mirror"), to the ■■■■ dansefloor friendly grooves ("Sonology/ Cybertone/ Voice Rec. Test,") this cd is ■ must have for any electro-industrialist's collection. Especially good for those of ■ who bought all this material the first time around on vinyl on Wax Trax!, years ago.

DIGITAL POODLE "Division" (Cleopatra-CD) Komrads! I tell you this release is one of the best offerings from the Great North ■ of late. The elektronik backings & distorted, chanted vox make this a perfect blur of FrontLine, Nitzers & The Dildos!!! DigitPoodle's stripped-down-to-the-bone electro-thud is well worth the listen & their pseudo-politk rants add another dementation to the floor.

FRONTLINE ASSEMBLY "Total Terror 2" (Cleopatra-CD) and "Millenium" (RoadRunner-CDsingle) "Terror," recorded in 86/87, is ■ blast to hear. An infant FLA in such an indiscriminating medium ■ digital-cd. They even put ■ disclaimer on the cover: "The equipment used is primitive, but then, so is mankind..." That may be all to true, but hearing the album's glorious bleeps & clangs proves the point: It's not the size of your R.A.M., it's how you ■■ it, OR it's not the size of the wand, it's the magic in it... UNLIKE the new FLA single, "Millenium," -- ■ KMFDM/Ministry-like gee-tar-athon, with not much to write home about... And to think Bill Leeb once said he'd never follow (what is sadly becoming) the "Industrial" route to Metaldom, I guess he mustave made more \$\$ offa those Fear Factory re-mixes than he did with FronLine (ever.) That'd be the only possible excuse for such ■ heap as this!!! Go figure.

LEAETHER STRIP "Underneath The Laughter" (Cleopatra-CD) After some

dissappointing outtings ■ KLUTE, Klaus Larsen (the master-mind behind,) is back with quite ■ vengeance! This is the absolute best thing he's put out yet!!! Heavy & Hard Hitting, without resorting to the typical metal gee-tar 'chug' used by way too many so-called 'Industrial' bands nowadays. Hurrah, Klaus!! Too many standout kuts to mention, but the overallfeel of this album is a pissed F#@! -Off to all 'oppressors of others (seemingly including the PC thought-police.) An engaging listen to say the least.

MIDI RAIN "One" (Vinyl Solution/Columbia-CD) I've always liked Midi Rain's euro-electro-pop sound, although regular-readers of this column, be forewarned this cd has far more to do with Camofalgue than say 242, or such. "One" contains all MR's singles to date with a couple of newer break-beat techno tracks as well. Some of these mixes ain't the most dancey ones- making it ■ perfect collection for home use, whilst Dj's are encouraged to seek out the 12inch versions of these classic-sounding cuts. Like New Order on eX (oh wait...)

NOISE UNIT "Strategy Of Violence" (Cleopatra-CD) For alla you ■ disappointed with the new FrontLine sound as I, do pick up this one, as it seems to be Bill & Rhys' "peace offering" with the electro-community, as they've obviously sold-out to some Metal/Shlock crossover type shite ■ of late! Enuff

ranting about what they've become-- Noise Unit (which is now 2FLAers, with out Dirk of The Klinik,) is what Front Line was. Throbbing, pounding & aggressive, the electro-way, sans gee-tars. This cd plays like ■ perfect merger btwn last years "Tactical Neural Implant" either InterMix cd. Definitely ■ Must-own!!

ORBITAL "Diversions" (FFRR-CD) Kicking off with the syncopated # "Impact USA," these techno brothers Hartnoll are back with a miniLP featuring 4 remixes of "Lush" (offa their last LP,) plus 3 others. And to the consumers advantage, this product contains the excellent Psychick Warriors remix, unlike last years domestic 12" version of "Lush." Brilliant.

PSYCHOPOMPS "Assassins DK United" (Cleopatra-CD) "Terror Techno" they call it, I call it ■ Industrial-non-stop-Laugh Riot! These guys make the Armageddon Dildos sound stone-faced serious! Similarly electro-aggro with piss-take lyrics abound-- this is the group who brought you the line "You're all Bitches & Fags!!" But the band says their lyrics are out there mostly for the shock value, so "So F#@k Off" the chorus to the track on here titled "Hate," probably is meant as ■ indirect pick-up line, of sorts!?!

SISTER MACHINE GUN "The Torture Technique" (WaxTrax/Tvt-CD) Much less of a NIN influence on this, their sophomore outting. Co-produced by J Marcus of DIE



WARZAU (who also did additional vox,) you can hear a Nitzer Ebb feel in some vox whilst Chris Randall sticks to his breathy-(KMFDM-goes to LA)-drawl. The backing tracks remain ■ interesting (if not more so,) ■ the 1st ("Sins Of The Flesh,") album and are a bit more experimental, even. With "Negative" & "Krackhead" as the albums stand-out cuts & "Cocaine Jesus" as the only flat-out dud on here, it's a big improvement in approach for SMG. Do See!!

SWAMP TERRORISTS "Combat Shock" (ReConstriction-CD) Swiss-based duo who've been around quite some time now (usually on Berlin's Machinery,) new release on SanDiego based 'torture-tech' label clock in somewhere btwn Chem Lab & (x?) label mates Oomp! The Terrorists' songs & drum/key sequences are decent enuff (excellent at times,) but one quickly becomes overly distracted by the constant (mis)-use of the Metal gee-tar parts-- it really just makes each & every cut sound

all-too-similar! It seems like just the same 'riff' in a different key ■ kinda ruins this whole album!! Oh well.

SCAVENGERS IN THE MATRIX-various (I.I.M.-CD) This compilation continues Chase(ReCon Records)'s obsession with searching out new talent (mostly) & exposing it, along with alternate mixes/side projects of better know underground groups. This is #4 in the If It Moves series & it's fair enuff, but personally I'd recommend last years release "Rivit Head Culture," which featured ■ lineup of (among others,) Non-Aggression Pact, Chem Lab, Crocodile Shop, Out Out & STG, for ■ more coherent package of the "electro-Industrial-sound."

X MARKS THE PEDWALK "The Killing Had Begun" (ZothOmmog/Cleo-CD) MUCH better than last year's "Human Desolation" cd. A ('Tin Omen') era Puppy-esq "I Promise You A Murder" starts things off nicely as ■ creepy electro-

masterpiece. Could be offa the Cyberaktiv cd-- it's that great!!! This decidedly ANTI-Metal-gee-tars electronic cd couldn't come any more recommended from me!!! One can only hope that this serves as ■ lesson to some of the bigger Industro-acts who've ditched their creativity w/ computers in favor of a formula-sell out approach.

Danse Assembly Top 6: (Fridays @ The Roxy Rt 27 New Brunswick):

1. CONSOLIDATED -Buric Acid
2. FRONT 242- Cage (rmx)
3. CROCODILE SHOP- Celebrate (rmx)
4. NIN- Closer (requested, usually)
5. SONIC YOUTH-SuperStar
6. OFFSPRING-Come Out & Play (keep'em)

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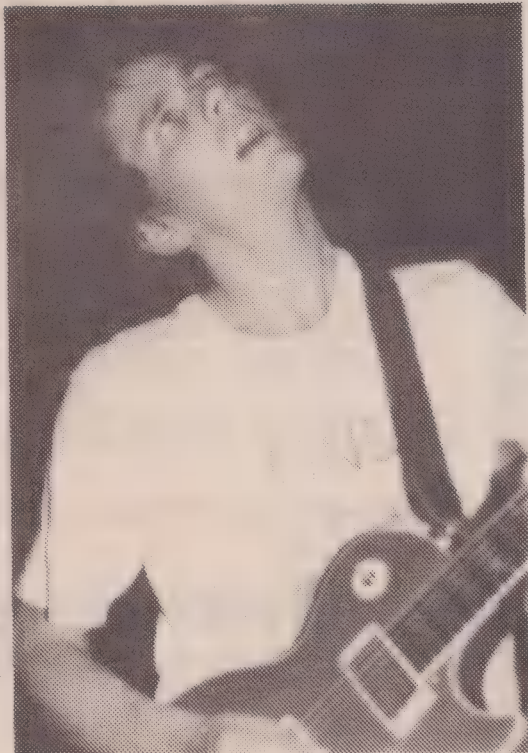


by Suzanne Thompson

When I told people I was planning to go to the New Music Seminar on my vacation most of them said, "What's that?" Well, it's a rock and roll convention (isn't that an oxymoron?) and, as a member of the press, I get to attend for the bargain rate of \$75 (as opposed to the regular rate of \$380). Who could pass that up? This will be my first time and I'm pretty excited. Five days of schmoozing with industry bigwigs, five nights of more music than you could possibly hope to hear... I can't wait.

Tuesday, July 19. I board the 10:00 am bus from Boston to New York via Providence. Yes, this will be a deluxe trip; working for a fanzine is a labor of love (translation: we don't get paid), so I'm

footing the bill for this jaunt myself. (But since I'm taking vacation time from my real job, you could say that Boston University is picking up part of the tab.) We arrive at Port Authority a little ahead of schedule and I take the subway uptown to check into my luxury accommodations. NMS arranges special rates with certain hotels and thoughtfully lists them in the brochure in descending order of expense. I could have stayed at the Rihga Royal for \$254.50 a night, or the Sheraton for \$168, or the Paramount for \$157, but I've chosen the West Side YMCA. My room is a tiny cell on the 13th floor with a single bed, a desk and chair, a mirror, a TV set, an air conditioner, and three windows, two of which overlook the roof of the Ethical Culture building and Central Park. The bathroom is down the hall, but what do you want for \$35 a night? Both the TV and the A/C work, so I settle in, then walk over to the Sheraton to check in. En route I see a man with a baby bobcat (bobbitten?) in a large animal carrier



Dean Wareham of Luna, photo by Suzanne

NMS DIARY: Like A Virgin

outside the Mayflower Hotel on Central Park West.

After picking up my ultracool press badge and my 20-pound bag of free press junk, I peruse the exhibition area (the body-piercing booth is the most exciting thing there), then return to the Y to plan my evening. I'm here representing a Boston fanzine called *The Noise*, so I'm supposed to be concentrating on things Bostonian. (As it turns out, *The Noise* isn't terribly interested in an article based on my experiences, but *Jersey Beat* is. Jim Testa likes my "virgin" angle.) Anyway, there are no Boston bands playing anywhere tonight, so I head to Brownies to see All About Chad, Big Drag, Too Much Joy, and the Wallmen. I thought I liked Too Much Joy but they turn out to be my least favorite band of the night. I saw them about three years ago at T.T. the Bear's Place in Cambridge and they were incredible, but that might have been because the place was packed and it was about 150 degrees inside and TMJ's singer stripped down to his blue bikini underwear and a Mekons t-shirt and dove into the crowd. Nothing that exciting happens tonight and I realize that all of their songs sound essentially the same. All About Chad are fun in a goofy kind of way; I don't remember anything about Big Drag; and the Wallmen are the find of the night. I look across the room between bands and spot a guy wearing a Doc Hopper t-shirt, so I go over to talk to him and discover that he's Jim Testa! I've only known him

through e-mail until now. We hang out until the end of the night, then take the subway uptown. Jim gets off at 42nd Street to catch a bus to New Jersey and I ride alone to Columbus Circle. What's with this "city that never sleeps" bullshit? The streets are deserted and a cab driver gestures to ask if I want a ride. Is he trying to tell me I shouldn't be walking around alone at 2:00 am?

Wednesday, July 20, 8:00 am. "I hear wedding bells / And a thousand violins/Jackhammers on my street/As the day begins..." What's with the construction noises outside my windows??? I managed to get back to sleep after the flapping pigeon wings awakened me an hour ago (they roost on the Ethical Culture roof), but this is too much!!! Maybe if I put the pillow over my head I can drift off again... I awaken a couple of hours later and it's hot as hell. I turn on the A/C and nothing happens. Oh well, I'll just open the windows; I have to take a shower and get to the Sheraton for the opening festivities anyway.

The Seminar starts off with awards for André Harrell (president of Uptown Records) and Hilly Kristal (owner of CBGB). Harrell gives a routine, boring acceptance speech; Kristal merely says that he's not going to bore us with his opinions about the state of rock and roll today but if anyone's really interested, know where to find him. Danny Goldberg (president of Atlantic Records) quotes Kurt Cobain extensively in his keynote address and I get a little *verklemt*, then the panels start. I'm kind of skeptical about this seminar business. Panel discussions are inherently boring and I wonder if listening to people pontificate about the current state of rock and roll will be any more interesting than listening to people pontificate about the current state of, say, higher education. I attend "DIY: How to Start and Operate a Label" and "Rock Independent Labels: Past, Present, and Future". The DIY panels are supposed to provide you with the information you need to go out and do whatever it is they're talking about, but this is not an auspicious beginning. Both panels are kind of interesting but also pretty dry and I don't come away with a lot of useful information. But the Sheraton is air-conditioned to the point of frostbite, I'm not complaining. I run into fellow Bostonian Dana McDonald and she gives me a flyer for an all-Boston show she's booked at the Lion's Den tonight, so I feel compelled to attend.

I expect the Lion's Den to be crawling with Bostonians and I'm not disappointed. This is something of an odd bill; the bands start out kinda poppy and get louder and harder as the evening progresses. Four of these bands (Machinery Hall, the Dirt Merchants, the Sextiles, and 6L6) played in this year's Rock 'n' Roll Rumble and one (Malachite) played in last year's Rumble, so I've seen them all more times than I would really care to. I've never seen Big Red Crush, though, and they turn out to be louder and harder than I expected. There's quite a crowd when Rumble winners the Dirt Merchants take the stage but it thins out as the evening wears on. I stay 'til the bitter end and take a cab uptown with Dana, who has drunk just a tad too much.

Thursday, July 21, morning. Pigeon wings...jackhammers...a bizarre dream about the New Music Seminar, a fellow *Noise* writer, and Chris Pierce from Doc Hopper. Okay, I'm awake now and it's HOT: 95 and 100% humidity. Still no A/C; it seems that the outlet is dead. The Figgs are playing at

Tramps tonight and, as the Bostonians say, I'm wicked psyched. For the reason I take my camera out of its bag and the lens is apart in my hand. I take it to a camera shop and the guy tells me that the pieces were glued together and the heat has melted the glue. I'm skeptical, but you can see glue residue all over the place. Nothing to do but buy a new lens and thank God for Visa.

I get to the Sheraton in time for College Radio 1994: The Reconstruction of the Original Myth, which is the best panel so far because all the panelists are arguing and the audience is talking back. Rorie Valdez from Boston's WZBC is on this panel but she barely gets to speak because a guy from Florida and a woman from WNYU are monopolizing the conversation. Hot topic: Why is "alternative" music usually white-boy guitar rock? Highlight: the WNYU woman tries to interrupt someone by saying, "Can I just say one thing?" and the audience yells, "No!" DIY: Publishing a Periodical is pretty dry stuff and the promised handouts never materialize, but I now know

more about web printing than I ever wanted to know. DIY: Press and Publicity is fun because the guys from *Alternative Press* and *Melody Maker* are ganging up on the guy from *Spin* and offering sarcastic tips on how to get your record reviewed. I've been on Figgs alert all day but there's been no sign of them.

Tramps is a bizarre place for rock and roll. Tables with fishnet-covered candles, outrageously priced drinks - it's more like a supper club than a rock club. I miss Keb Mo (whoever/whatever that is) but arrive in time for Blonde Redhead. The Figgmobile is parked outside but there's still no sign of them, so I buy a \$4 Rolling Rock and park myself at a table near the door that leads







Bostonites hanging out at The Lion's Den

backstage. I'm getting extremely bored with Blonde Redhead when the Figgs arrive and we go outside to talk. We're soon joined by producer Mitchell Froom and former Del Fuego Dan Zanes, who've apparently come to see the Figgs. I hear a couple of Cell's songs when Pete Hayes and I go inside near the end of their set to get beers with his drink tickets but I don't remember what they sound like. The room fills up before and empties out after the Figgs' incredible set and I somehow end up keeping an eye on their merchandise table for about half an hour before going back outside to talk to Pete while Native are playing. I catch up on Figgs then hop in a cab and head uptown (after Pete convinces me that taking the subway alone at 1:00 am would be at least foolhardy, if not dangerous).

Friday, July 22. Today's first panel is Modern Rock Radio: Heroes and Villains, with former Boston deejay Alexa Tobin as one of the panelists. She's now program director of a station in Vermont that also covers Albany and mentions the Figgs as an example of a local band that's about to break. The hot topic in this panel is whether or not "alternative" radio's purpose is to break bands for top 40 radio. The consensus is a resounding NO! There's nothing interesting going on for a couple of hours, so I head down to NYU to visit my former coworkers (who keep saying, "You look good! You look happy!"), then back uptown for the final panel, DIY: How to Book Your Own Tour. The panelists (artists, agents, tour managers, and club bookers) are supposed to be talking about how to set up a tour, but they're mostly just trading anecdotes. Highlight: the woman from CBGB says if you get to the club and act like a pain in the ass they won't book you again. Duh.

Night. I take the hellish subway to CBGB to see Boston bands Helium and Kustomized and I'm drenched in sweat by the time

Saturday, July 23. I get  early start so I can photograph the exteriors of all the clubs I've been to and discover that most of them are metal-grated during the day. (Toto, I don't think we're in Boston anymore.) I'm bummed, but then I have one of those right-place-at-the-right-time experiences: I'm walking down Bleeker Street when a cab pulls up and a familiar-looking man carrying a guitar gets out and rings someone's doorbell. As I pass him I realize he's Sean Eden from Luna and kick myself for not having the presence of mind to slow down and  if that's Dean Wareham's bell he's ringing. Oh well, time to check out Juliana Hatfield and Bettie Serveert at SummerStage - or  I think. It's been sunny all morning, but the clouds roll in just as the show is about to begin and it POURS. I'm umbrellaless and get drenched,  I decide that

The bad karma continues into the evening. My plan is to see Luna at CBGB at 10:00, then catch Scarce at the Mercury Lounge at midnight. I get to CBGB early to insure a spot right up front and have to suffer through Dish. Luna are supposed to be on next, but they're setting up for another band instead. What??? I guess they switched time slots. The Swinging Neckbreakers take to the stage ■ about 10:15 with ■ 18-song set list and I tell one of the young men I've been talking to that these had better be short songs. As ■ happens, they are, and they all sound like garage versions of "Tutti Frutti" or "All Day and All of the Night." One of my young companions remarks that I should love this stuff since I'm from Boston and I tell him that I like a little more originality in my garage rock. It's hot ■ hell in here tonight—where's that fan? But Luna finally appear at about 11:30 and I forget about the heat for the next 45 minutes or so. Then it's time to race over to the Mercury Lounge, which turns out to be filled to capacity. My press badge won't even get me in, but that's okay because I'm all sweaty and my hair is plastered to my head and my deodorant gave out hours ago, so I walk to the subway and head for home—I ■ the Y. I'm still wound up when I get there so I take a shower and start packing. New York has been fun, but I'm ready to leave.

[illegible]

Diary Of A Rock Critic

A Journal Of One Obsessed Fan's Adventures In Clubland

by Jim Testa

JUNE

Thursday, June 2

Media Expo '94, The Bank, NYC

Fanzine editors, by and large, don't get a lot of respect. No one asks me to be on panels at the New Music Seminar. CNN doesn't call us up for interviews with major rock stars commit ghastly suicides. So when a local promoter called up and asked me if I wanted to be part of "Media Expo '94" - for fifty bucks, yet - of course I said yes. And how does that old saying go - pride goeth before a fall?

I knew this whole thing sucked when I showed up and saw that the cover was \$12 - for six local bands that no one had ever heard. You could see pretty much an identical bill at anyone of six other NY clubs for \$5 on a weekend.

The idea was that various members of the local media who cover local bands - which means, of course, they couldn't invite anyone from the Times, Daily News, Newsday, Post, or Village Voice - would be ensconced in the balcony at The Bank and made available to the bands (and anyone in the audience) who wanted to talk to us for advice. The problem was that the people running Media Expo '94 and the promoters who booked this show were two separate companies. So none of the bands knew what was going on, and in typical NYC fashion, most of the loaded out ten seconds after they finished their set.

I missed the first band, Plank, although the only other media-ite there (a girl from WSOU) said they weren't bad. The next band up was If Darwin Played Drums, who win the award for buying the biggest unsigned band ads in the Aquarian Weekly every week. These guys actually got wind of the Media Expo thing because they left a few presskits and demo tapes in the balcony. On the other hand, no amount of advice would make up for their complete lack of stage presence or big, fat, ugly sound. Their presskit indicated that they'd actually had quite a few gigs at large venues, especially in South Jersey, but you'd never know it to look at them - a fat guy with a mustache whose clothes didn't fit on keyboards (who kept referring to sheet music,) a lead singer with a beergut and a receding hairline, a skinny shirtless drummer who played way too loud, and a bass player who managed to make himself invisible on stage. Remember when guys in bands were supposed to be hip and sexy? If Darwin Played Drums look like the guys I was too cool to hang out with in high school - and I wasn't very cool in high school.

River Styx were typical alternates who saw a Pearl Jam video and decided it might be fun to start a band. They didn't really seem to have any idea of what they wanted to sound like, but the lead singer had a funny haircut and swayed nicely to the music, and at least they looked like they might actually know that Smashing Pumpkins is a rock band and not something hooligans do on Halloween. If their drummer could actually hit a snare roll on time, they'd be worth checking out.

There's obviously still a place in the world for hair metal bands - just as long as it's someplace I don't have to watch them. Attack-U had all the cliches down pat - double-bass drumkit, choreographed hair flips, shirtless lead guitarist, screaming meemie vocals. If they ever get signed (yeah, right), I have a great marketing idea for them - get Anacin to sponsor their

tour. This is probably as close to Hell as I'm likely to get - trapped in a shitty club with a long lineup of shitty bands and, since I'm getting paid to be there, I can't even bail out. Fortunately for my sanity, the next band on the bill turned out to be Sound Advice, NYU pop-rockers who I not only know, but actually like. Although I'm familiar with their set, the boys showed me something tonight I hadn't seen before - they still put on a killer set even if they're trapped in a total pit with no more than a half dozen other people in the room.

The final band of the evening were called Rusty James, thirtysomething blues rockers from Staten Island who claimed they had been forced to buy \$300 worth of advance tickets from the promoter in order to get on this bill. Although I vehemently opposed to pay-for-play, I'm not a big fan of stupidity either. If these mooks actually bought \$300 worth of tickets, what did they do with them? There couldn't have been more than three people left in the audience. Pay for play - where bands have to pay a fee to play a show, and then presumably earn the money back by selling tickets - only works when bands are foolish and greedy enough to think that being on a bill is going to make a difference. Rusty James assumed that the other bands selling tickets for this show would bring in an audience - they didn't



SPELLCASTERS

- and that there would be important people at the music industry at this show - there weren't. So they threw \$300 of their hard-earned cash into the toilet.

Saturday, June 4 - Jim and Chris' House, afternoon; then, Court Tavern - New Brunswick NJ. It's always a pleasure traveling down to Brunfuss for a night at the Court Tavern, but today was even better because there was also an afternoon show at 67 Handy Street, home of Chris and Jim; two very cool guys who rent a big ol' house and sometimes have bands come in and play on the weekends. I got there early and wound up getting recruited to work the door (collecting two bucks and making a big smudgy X on everybody's hand) and barbecue some burgers for a while. As soon as the band started, though, I headed for the basement to hear the music. First up were New Brunswick's own Seething Grey, fronted by Pete Horvath, who's been in a zillion other bands (P.E.D., for one, and currently in

Greyhouse for another.) Seething Grey is Pete's pop outlet, though, where he writes catchy, fun tunes in a sort of Green Day style, filtered through his own unique emo/punk presence. A great set that flew by way too fast. Next up was Weston, PA fun-punks who would have been on Buy Our Records if they had been around in the mid 80's. One guy stripped down to his boxers, two of the guys wore these horrible halter tops they found at a garage sale down the block, and they played a lot of silly Descendents-styled punk tunes. After a couple more burgers and a root beer, I headed back downstairs again for One Nature, four young guys who live in the blue-collar 'burbs surrounding New Brunswick. The group's music is hard to peg, a mixture of emocore, pop/punk, and hardcore, with big ambitious melodies and galloping rhythms that remind me a bit of Samiam. At the front of the band is lead singer Mark M., the most totally emo singer I've ever seen. He screams, he writhes, he doubles over in agony, he affects twisted psycho faces and talks to himself in the middle of songs - the guy totally loses his own personality and submerges himself in this tortured effusive stage persona. It's amazing to watch, and the band totally kicks butt behind him, guitarist Mark F. cutting the air with jagged shrieks of feedback and distortion, bassist Phil carrying the melody with fluid basslines, and Chris drums keeping everybody else in 1st gear with nimble, propulsive drumming. I suspected they'd be hard to follow, although the ostensible headliners, Karate from Boston, barely tried. Part of the indie wave of polite, politically-correct post-punk pop bands (big in Boston, as you've probably noticed,) Karate keeps everything so low-key that they hardly seem to be playing at all.

After a short break, it was off to the Court Tavern, one of my favorite places to see bands. First of all, it's the last place on earth that proofs me; at my age, it's a real compliment to be asked to prove you're over 21. The bands are always good, the sound isn't bad, and I usually run into people I know there. That was especially true this evening, since I knew all three bands really well.

First up were Desire from New York City, featuring Jim and Alex of Das Damen fame on vocals and guitar. Very much a nineties indie-pop band, Desire is much more vocals-driven than Das Damen, with Alex, Jim, and the drummer trading off on lead vocals and all three of them chiming in on really nice two- and three-part harmonies. The songs are light, simple, catchy, and melodic, and Jim hasn't lost any of his boyish charm or bounce. A fun band that's fun to watch.

Next up was New Brunswick's Room Eleven, who suffered through a short set hampered by a serious injury their bassist had received earlier in the day. He came on stage with his hand wrapped up like a mummy and started bleeding through the hospital bandages after just one song, so the band called it quits after only four or five numbers. Lead singer/rhythm guitarist Jeff Hack (a dead ringer for JB's Mick Hale, by the way) carries himself well on stage, and the band's British-flavored dream-pop sounded just fine. I think they could have finished the set as a three-piece without a bass, but Jeff is a bit anal-retentive in that regard and didn't want to present the band in anything less than their best light. Give him credit for having standards, although given the circumstances, a little improvisation would probably have served him (and the audience) better.

Last up was New Brunswick's Urchins, with old pals Andy Gesner and Dave Reynolds from Spiral Jetty on bass and guitar. The Urchins play off the allure of their female lead singer, who has a great voice and a commanding stage presence - she's sexy, in charge, and thoroughly captivating, and the band's clever, well-constructed songs sounded great. These guys are ready to make an album, it'd be nice if some prescient label picked them up and gave them a chance to reach some fans beyond New Brunswick's city limits for a change.

Thursday, June 11 - Maxwells, Hoboken NJ

Another Alternatteen night, one of those shows where it seems like everybody in attendance is male, under 25, and wearing either a backpack or a goatee (or both.) This crowd of kids is weird though; they don't dance, they don't bounce up and down, they rarely smile, they don't make any effort to connect with one another...what a sad, glum, uninspired bunch of kids. You wonder why they're at the show.

Of course, many of the bands that play to this audience are just as bereft of any of the joy that music is supposed to bring. Take, for example, the first band on the bill tonight, Custom Floor. Yet another Unwound-type angst/drone band - a genre I'm going to start calling post-I don't feel good today music - they did a wonderful job of looking miserable on stage, ignoring the audience, and playing the same chord for thirty minutes. Very indie, very trendy, very boring.

Tanner was a little better, with a fiery staccato delivery that punched every song across with nasty, biting polyrhythms. The problem turned out to be that every song in their set sounded like that. Sheesh.

Ah, but then it was time for Drive Like Jehu, guitar gods of the San Diego punk scene and saviors of indie rock. Funny how bands come along like this and are instantly imitated. The problem is that bands only imitate part of

what makes Jehu so special. It's easy to copy the nine-minute songs and the bursts of adrenalized anger, much harder to approximate this guy's voice, a cross between an angry, young Paul Westerberg and that excitable boy Mac MacCaulay of Superchunk, and nearly impossible to duplicate Jehu's unending twists and twirls and riffs and tempo changes. Yeah, their songs might go on forever, but it's not nine minutes of monochromatic drone, it's a nine-minute rollercoaster ride through constantly changing musical terrain, from quiet and pastoral to explosive and frenzied, back to serenely melodic and then cranked up to 11 again. It's exhausting just listening to this band, but thrilling as well. You never know when a song starts where it's going to take you, but with so much other good stuff in life, getting there is more than half the fun.

Thursday, June 16 - New York State Armory, NYC

All right, one could have foreseen that NYC would get hit by a freak wave of heat and humidity right before this show. But so, booking Soundgarden's tour (with fellow Seattle-ites Tad and Eleven) into this concrete unair-conditioned mausoleum was an act of pure sadism. After entering through a small anteroom, concertgoers emerged into a huge stone cave that resembled an aircraft hangar. Not surprisingly, the acoustics were non-existent and, especially with three "heavy" bands on the bill, vocals and guitars were swallowed up in a dense thunderous roar of rolling drums and



FLOOD #3

pounding bass. Even before the first band got on stage, the place was muggy and oppressive. By the time Soundgarden had played four or five songs, the room became a mass of barechested teenage boys and wet, weary, wilted faces desperately trying to stave off heat stroke.

Tad opened the festivities at 8 p.m. with a blast of profanity from gargantuan frontman Tad Doyle, who didn't seem to enjoy the fact that the audience wasn't responding to their set. Between four-letter words, Tad The Man called the crowd "jaded" and "posers" and actually managed to inspire a small but vigorous moshpit to get started directly in front of the stage. For the vast majority of the soldout crowd, though, it was too hot to even think about moving. Tad's high-energy blasts of bluesy grunge-rock seemed to be made for the cavernous space; Doyle's vocals were managed to be heard above the din, if few songs had any staying power.

Eleven, a trio with keyboards, bass, and drums, came next. The band's female singer had a sharp, cutting Siouxsie-like voice and the band's

churning, dissonant melodies pounded through the hazy hot air of the coliseum with surprising power. Although any sort of nuance from the keyboards was lost in the mix, the band went ~~well~~ well, inspiring even more moshing from the diehard kids in the pit than Tad.

After what seemed an interminable setup (something like 45 minutes,) Soundgarden sent out Artis, the Seattle "Spoonman" from the song and video of the ~~name~~ name, who attempted to do a short spoken-word piece. Catcalls from the crowd - who ~~hot~~ hot, tired, and ready to kill at that point - cut him off after ~~few~~ few minutes.

Finally, ~~time~~ time for Soundgarden. With Nirvana just ~~memory~~ memory and Pearl Jam's summer tour derailed by their feud with Ticketmaster, Soundgarden has emerged ~~the~~ the biggest grunge band left, and their show clearly showed their awareness of their newfound power - not to mention its source. Because when it ~~was~~ time for them to start, we didn't get to ~~Soundgarden~~ Soundgarden - ~~got~~ got Soundgarden video, projected on ~~a~~ giant white scrim that hung in front of the stage, with the band playing an unnamed instrumental in the background. After the video, the screen fell to the ground and the band leaped into action with ~~a~~ frantic rendition of "Jesus Christ Pose," ironically the one Soundgarden video that had been banned by MTV. They quickly followed with "Spoonman" from their most recent album, Superunknown, with Artis accompanying them on, what else, spoons. And after that, it's all pretty much ~~blur~~ blur. Most of Soundgarden's songs tend to sound the ~~same~~ same anyway - either frantic Sabbathoid metal riffs or dreamy Led Zeppelin reveries, and with the abominable p.a. and the room's horrible acoustics turning everything into ~~loud~~ loud clangorous roar, it ~~was~~ almost impossible to tell one song from another. The band played almost all of Superunknown and ~~a~~ few older songs, but it didn't make a lot of difference. The heat and humidity by this point had turned the Armory into ~~a~~ tropical hellhole, and the sound system turned into number into yet another four minute onslaught of drums and bass rumbling over Chris Cornell's reedy, straining vocals and Kim Thayill's inventive guitar work, most of which ~~was~~ ~~lost~~ in the murk. By the end of the 90 minute set, Cornell had all but lost his voice and a good portion of the audience had already left to find ~~the~~ air, including almost every ~~who~~ who had been in the room. All that remained ~~was~~ ~~a~~ lot of sweaty male adolescents, and most of them ~~was~~ willing ~~well~~ well.

Too bad nobody filmed it; it would have made ~~a~~ great documentary: "Shirtless In Seattle."

Monday, June 27 - Maxwell's, Hoboken NJ

A rare club appearance by Ween is always ~~a~~ occasion for joy, and tonight ~~was~~ going to be ~~special~~ special, since the boys were playing out ~~the~~ The Ween, with a real bassist and drummer as opposed ~~to~~ their usual background-music DAT machine. But first up were the pride of Lambertville, NJ, Shimmydisc recording artists False Front. I'd never been much of a fan of this band before, mostly because they rarely played ~~out~~ anywhere but New Brunswick and also because their two albums ~~was~~ somewhat disappointing. But tonight they rocked the house. They're a funny-looking bunch, with that lean barechested lead singer doing his Iggy thing, a humongous long-haired mook on guitar, a couple of non descript joes filling out the lineup. Tonight though, ~~with~~ with ~~a~~ couple of technical problems and few false starts, everything just wailed. These guys blew through four consecutive numbers that any decent metal band would kill for as ~~a~~ set closer, and they still weren't done: Huge mutant slabs of Sabbathoid metal, screaming psycho vocals, drums that pounded like the end of the world... God, it ~~was~~ great.

And they fucking blew Ween off the stage. Not that Ween weren't good. But tonight, they just seemed...indifferent. In the past, Mickey and Aaron (or Dean and Gene Ween, ~~as~~ they prefer to ~~be~~ known) have parlayed their many years of growing up together into the some of seamless comedic timing that you just don't ~~have~~ anymore. With ~~the~~ full band, though, Mickey just becomes "the guitarist" and Aaron is "the frontman." There ~~was~~ of that funny interplay between the two, ~~no~~ goofy antics, ~~no~~ silly faces. Maybe they're just trying to outlive that hideous video they did for "Daisies." Elektra ~~was~~ ~~is~~ dumb trying to pawn them ~~as~~ some sort of weirdo novelty act. The thing about Ween is that, yes, they ~~are~~ weird and take too many drugs and sing about strange stuff, but they fucking rock. And they always did, ~~when~~ when they were ~~weird~~ ~~and~~ goofy and only had the bass and drums on ~~a~~ dinky little toy tape recorder playing behind them. On the good songs tonight, like "Don't Get Too Close To My Fantasy" (now there's the song that should have been ~~the~~ first video!) and even an old silly one like "Tick," they rocked the house set. But they did it fitfully, almost uncomfortably, ~~as~~ they hadn't had time to do a proper set list. Then they stopped, then they decided to play ~~a~~ few more songs...but ~~there~~ ~~was~~ no pace to it, no build, just ~~a~~ bunch of songs thrown together. I hope they get their act together before they go on the road to promote the next album, which is supposed to be out ~~at~~ the end of

the summer.

Saturday, July 2 - Giovana's, Fairfield CT

Road trip! This being the 4th of July weekend, I felt like getting out of town. So when I heard that my friend Paul Kontonis was driving up to Connecticut so that Flood, this young Brooklyn band he manages could audition for Wonderland Records, I went along for the ride.

I wasn't impressed by Flood when I met them at their singer's house in Brooklyn. In fact, they seemed like the sort of braindead guidos I used to go to high school with. But appearances can be deceiving. Put them ~~on~~ the stage and they're a combination of Pearl Jam, the Doors, and whatever that other magical ingredient is that makes ~~a~~ band special. They've got a charismatic lead singer who ~~can~~ transfix an audience, some terrific rocking tunes and ~~a~~ a solid power ballad for a change of pace. They ended with a long, moody trance rocker with ~~a~~ definite Doors influence that had this place enraptured.

The headliner of the evening was Mighty Purple, one of the biggest unsigned bands in Connecticut. Unfortunately, not even their draw was enough to overcome the temptations of Fourth Of July weekend; most of their fans must have gone to the beach because the turnout for this show was surprisingly puny. It's amazing what this band can do to a room full of teenagers, though. One minute I was standing in a quiet, near-empty club (that doubles as an Italian restaurant) and the next minute, I was in the middle of ~~a~~ all-ages rock 'n' roll party, with balloons falling from the sky ~~as~~ if by magic and ~~a~~ couple of dozen peppy teens bouncing up and down along with the music. Somebody described the band as Barney for adolescents and they ~~were~~ at least half-right; if you've ever watched ~~a~~ two-year old's eyes glaze over at the sight of that lumpy purple dinosaur, you'll know what ~~a~~ roomful of 16 year old girls look like staring at Mighty Purple's lead singer, Steve Rodgers. Half of Mighty Purple's set is lightweight fluff and the other half drags, but any band that can turn "All Along The Watchtower" and "Helter Skelter" into teenybopper pop/funk deserves credit for ~~a~~ certain amount of ingenuity, if nothing else.

Friday, July 8 - Maxwells, Hoboken



No. 1 activity at Lollapalooza: Waiting in line...

The bill ~~was~~ Wild Carnation, Fuzzy, and Veruca Salt. Wild Carnation is the ~~band~~ band featuring Brenda Sauter, the former bassist for the Feelies, and they have a definite Feelies sound to a lot of their songs, with the ~~same~~ simple chord changes and that bouncy syncopated rhythm. Brenda doesn't really have the stage presence to carry a band all by herself, but her trio does play well and the songs she's written have ~~a~~ definite charm.

Fuzzy, from Boston, are famous as the band with the Lemonheads' drummer, Dave Ryan. But tonight, Ryan ~~was~~ busy making big bucks with the Lemonheads at Roseland, so they had their other drummer filling in. The group is composed of two women guitarist/singers and two guys on bass and drums. They're not bad and a few of the songs toward the end of the set had a certain zing, but Fuzzy reminds me too much of why I'm starting to hate indie rock. For most of their set, the two women singers exuded that studied nonchalance that says, "We're not going to do anything to make you think we're actually working up here trying to entertain you, because that wouldn't be cool, so we'll just sleepwalk through our set and hope you like some of it." Obviously I'm reading ~~that~~ into their stage demeanor; they might just have stage fright, or maybe they ~~are~~ too much for dinner. But I've ~~seen~~ too many bands who get ~~on~~ stage and act like they're doing the audience a favor by

being there lately.

Now Veruca Salt, there's a band that works up a sweat and really puts on a show. I had heard the hype - they were the hot shit band at SXSW last March, but I missed that show. My buddy Jim DeRogatis told me they were good too, and as the pop music critic for the Chicago Sun-Times, he should know about Chicago bands. But I was dubious.... especially when I saw the disgusting major label feeding frenzy that was going on. Maxwells holds about 200 people when it's full, and I swear, tonight at least 50 of them were major label A&R dweebs. And it wasn't the cool A&R types like Gitter or Dave Wolter, it was the ass-kissing no-talent lemmings who were all running around trying to sign Pavement and Superchunk last year.

It didn't matter. This band is god. There's two girl singers who play guitars, and guys on bass and drums, just like Fuzzy. The comparisons end there. They rock. They sing. They harmonize. They rock. They write great, catchy tunes with hooks that stick in your head. They rock. I had never heard the band before, never heard a note of their music, and I was singing along by the time they hit the second chorus on some of their stuff. Veruca Salt actually threatens to solve the great post-Patti Smith Female Rocker paradigm. We've had girls who could rock, like L7 or Hole, but they couldn't really sing and they didn't write very good songs. And there are girls with sweet, feminine voices who can write catchy tunes, like Juliana Hatfield or Belly, but they don't really rock. Veruca Salt combines the best of both camps. I even bought a shirt. I think I'm in love.

Thursday, July 14 - Maxwells, Orpheus - Hoboken

Kind of a weird night. It started off at Maxwells' to catch The Figgs, whose CD I really liked, and the Chainsaw Kittens. The Figgs are one of those scruffy garage bands that play unfettered punky raveups - from their CD, I was expecting the second coming of the Vacant Lot, one of the all-time great NY garage-punk combos. These guys want to be the Vacant Lot, and they're certainly scruffy and likeable enough. They just don't have the tunes. Three songs into the set and it was snooze time. Which is two songs longer than it took with Chainsaw Kittens, one of those bands threatening to turn "alternative rock" into a bad generic cliché.

So I was out there and on my way home when I stuck my head into Orpheus (which is right on the way) and saw the place was packed. On a Thursday night. For two bands I had never heard of before. Intrigued, I decided to stay a bit. A wise choice, it turned out.

Mr. Bitter was on first. Apparently they are a local band from Hoboken, part of the what I call the Condo Yuppie Set - twentysomethings who have just moved into their first post-college apartments, working their first jobs, and enjoying the first real fruits of adulthood. They're not all that different from the alternative crowd that hangs out at Maxwells, except that the Condo Yuppies tend to have better-paying jobs and a taste for Zima. Anyway, the guys in Mr. Bitter have a lot of friends in the audience and they all turned out for this show, because the place was packed. They're okay, and reminded me of Live - a frenetic, emotional vocalist whose singing is way on top of the mix, with a swirly REM-ish guitar sound.

They were followed by the Spellcasters, another young Hoboken band, this a three-piece. The lead singer/guitarist has a high, sweet, Alex Chiltonish voice and the band plays the sort of dreamy guitar-pop that gives rock critics multiple orgasms. I thought they were terrific and I can't wait to hear them again.

Saturday, August 6: Lollapalooza, Downing Stadium, NYC

Going to Lollapalooza is a lot like spending the day in Disneyworld - it seems like you spend an hour in line for every five minutes of fun. There are lines for everything, from the overpriced food and soft drinks, to the mechanical rides and sideshow booths, to the port-a-johns. I even spent 90 minutes in line just to pick up my ticket and photo pass. Luckily the one thing you don't have to wait in line for is the music, and this year, that turned out to be a pretty good deal.

This year, Lollapalooza found a new venue for its New York-area stop, Downing Stadium on Randall's Island, which is in the East River just off Harlem. It was easy to reach by car or mass transit (I took the subway to a shuttle bus with no problems) and there was plenty of room. The stadium itself is an old concrete arena that reminded me of going to high school football games. Fans had the choice of sitting in the cement seats that surrounded the main stage, or camping out on the field or a blanket, or tussling their way into the huge mosh pit in front of the stage (which never seemed to stop moshing, in between bands when they'd slam to the p.a. muzak.) And then there was plenty of room

for the midway, which included the Second Stage, a spoken-word booth, cheesy carnival rides, lots of booths selling overpriced souvenirs and indigestible food, and showers (called "misting booths") where overheated slamdancers could cool off.

This year's bill included Green Day, L7, Tribe Called Quest, the Breeders, George Clinton and the P-Funk All-Stars, the Beastie Boys, and Smashing Pumpkins, with Stereolab, the Charlie Hunter Trio, Lambchop, and the Fu-Schnickens on the Second Stage. How can Lollapalooza support such an eclectic bill? Especially when it has such a narrowly-defined audience - a good 80% of the crowd had to be white, middle-class, males in the late teens or early twenties, not a very wide demographic. The secret is that no more than half the audience even bothers listening to the bands, at least up until it gets dark and the two headliners go on.

You can pretty much divvy a Lollapalooza audience up into a couple of different factions. There are the listeners, who camp out on a blanket in front of the main stage and don't do anything but watch the bands all day. Then there are the browsers, who spend all their time on the midway, sampling the different rides and attractions, shopping at the different booths, checking out the Second Stage and spoken word performances, and so on. There are the frat guys, who never move more than 20 feet from the beer tent all day, and of course the moshers, who spend the afternoon getting tossed around in the pit, stage diving and crowd surfing and turning the music into a participatory sporting event. This year for the first time, Lollapalooza offered free drinking water (if you could find it - there were a couple of fountains at the far end of the midway.) Everything else cost a fortune: \$2.50 for a can of Coke, \$3 for a small glass of lemonade; \$2.50 for a hot dog; \$5 for an inedible sausage & peppers sandwich.

It's almost impossible to see and hear everything; I missed L7 while I was watching the Charlie Hunter Trio on the Second Stage. Here's a quick rundown of what I did see:

Green Day - Opened the show and were simply brilliant. They don't have any trouble captivating a huge audience on a massive stage. They were loud and funny and wonderfully goofy, poking fun at the arena-rock excess all around them and inviting stagedivers to sing along with cheese-metal hits they'd try to play.

The Breeders - Virtually disappeared on the big stage. They weren't bad, just ordinary.

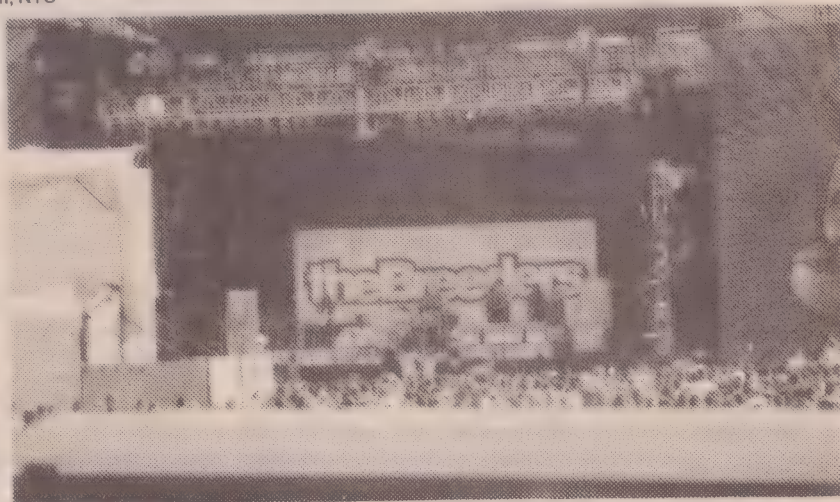
A Tribe Called Quest - A great live hip hop band, because they bring along live instruments and don't rely on lip synching. Some of their stage patter seemed sanctimonious and self-serving but they brought Queen Latifah and Flavor Flav out to do a song with them, which earned a few extra points.

Charlie Hunter Trio (Second Stage): Hot jazz licks on a hot afternoon. Sweet. Lots of kids really seemed to dig the music too.

George Clinton & The P-Funk All Stars: I really had my doubts on whether this would go over, but Clinton was the surprise hit of the day. The P-Funk horns sounded great over the big sound system and Clinton, in a bright red African robe, even got the mosh pit to stop pummeling each other and dance for a while.

Beastie Boys: They put on a good show, rapping for a while and then getting behind their instruments for some hardcore and jazz, but those screechy New Yawk voices get really annoying after a while. Ninety minutes of Beasties is about 45 minutes too much.

Smashing Pumpkins: Musically they were great on the big stage, but Billy Corgan should really keep his mouth shut (or get a sense of humor.)



Somewhere off in the distance, there's a band playing

CMJ MUSIC MARATHON - September 21-24

New York is a great city for film buffs. Its museums are among the best in the world. And the city is world-renowned for its theater. But live music? Sure, there's a lot of it going on, but by and large, New York is not known as a rock and roll Mecca. That all changes for a week every Fall, though, when the College Music Journal (CMJ) stages its annual Music Marathon, and the city's club scene is overrun by thousands of eager college-radio kids and a polypourri of the best and most promising bands from all over the country.

There's no way any person can experience the hundreds of bands (at over a dozen different venues in Manhattan and Hoboken) that play the CMJ Music Marathon, but every year, some of us willingly sacrifice a lot of sleep and a little more of whatever's left of our hearing to catch as many groups as we can. They don't call it a "music marathon" for nothing. Here's a capsule diary of some of what I experienced over five frenetic days last week.

Wednesday:

The big show was the big show at the Academy Theater, which offered college-radio darlings Weezer, the techno-noise assault of Consolidated, and the return of Hole, featuring Courtney Love Cobain, on their first tour since the tragic death of Courtney's husband Kurt. I opted for the more classic punk-rock allure of CBGB, where New York's own Madder Rose played a breathtakingly beautiful set of their poignant angst-rock, primarily featuring songs from their excellent last album, *Panic On*. They were followed by Wool (profiled in last week's column,) a L.A.-based post-punk quartet that combine the emotional resonance of classic D.C. hardcore with the full-bodied songwriting of mainstream rock. Obviously stoked for the event, Wool's frontman Peter Stahl came out breathing fire, leaping around the stage and leading his band through an explosive set that proved an exhilarating contrast to Madder Rose's airier, more laid-back approach.

Thursday:

This turned out to be one of those nights when almost nothing went right. The night began at the Pozo Lounge, a newly refurbished space on St. Mark's Place that had only recently started booking live music. The club, just off Third Avenue, turned out to be smartly decorated and quite inviting, with a nice selection of reasonably-priced draft beers, a good sound system, and even a modest food menu. Unfortunately, the band - Oldman, a young trio on Grass Records - was a big disappointment, tuneless and almost comically inept. They couldn't play in time, keep their guitars tuned, sing in key, or - from what they played for this show - write a decent song. Their entire audience seemed to be high school students (except for the drummer's mom, a dad, who were sitting next to me.) Given the umpteen bands signed already to Grass, you have to wonder who does their A&R... Hire The Handicapped? Or do they just get sloppy seconds from *Star Search*?

From the Pozo Lounge I hurried over to The Spiral to check out a Berkeley pop-punk band called Knapsack - who didn't show up. From there it was over to the Rock Ridge Saloon, housed in the space that used to be the Bleecker Street Cinema, to check out a mid-western band called N.I.L.8 (pronounced "annihilate,") but the club was running a good hour behind schedule and I was faced instead by a horrible, aging metal band from who-knows-where called Fat Bastid. Enough of that. So it was into a cab and through a driving rain to the far west side

of 14th Street and another new club, carved out of an old storage locker in the heart of the meat-packing district, called The Cooler. There I enjoyed Techno Squid Eats Parliament, a Memphis-based group barely out of their teens who reminded me of the young Gigolo Aunts - poppy, a little goofy, and head over heels in love with the idea of being in a rock and roll band. Their infectious good spirits rescued an otherwise dismal night.

Friday:

So many bands, a little time? The Figgs or Brownie's? Or the Texas Instruments at Street Level? Or the promising downtown hip hop group Soul Coughing at Warner Brothers' showcase at the Manhattan Center? Oh well, I opted for the Continental Club and Down By Law, the SoCal punk group led by longtime punk rock veteran Dave Smalley (D.Y.S., Dag Nasty, All.) After sets by Corduroy, an undistinguished pop/punk pretender from Green Day's hometown of Berkeley, and the always-enjoyable Long Island-based Garden Variety, Down By Law came out to a packed house and rocked the place silly, running through most of their new *Epitaph* LP, *Punkrockacademy* fight song, and ending with the classic Dag Nasty tune "My Best Friend," which had all the pop-kids in the place singing along to the top of their lungs.

Saturday:

What better place to end the weekend than at good old Maxwell's. The show had sold out weeks before but luckily I had been prescient enough to pick up a ticket. The big attraction was Weezer, whose debut *Geffen* LP is doing quite well, especially on college radio and MTV. The group turned out to be down to earth and a little overwhelmed by their sudden success, but ran through an amiable set that covered most of their album. They were followed by Chicago's Veruca Salt, one of the biggest "buzz" bands in the industry despite



MADDER ROSE at CBGB

their relative youth and inexperience. The group's two female vocalists harmonize beautifully and unlike many indie-rock groups, they actually know how to rock. They're a little overwhelmed too - "we've spent all week doing photo shoots and interviews," one member of the band told the audience, "so it's nice to be up here remembering that this is what we're in a band for, playing for you." They're amazing, by the way. Songwriting, vocals, stage presence... They've got it all. And, apparently, the right attitude too.

That's the CMJ Music Marathon for you in a nutshell: A couple of duds, a lot of hype, and sometimes, when you're lucky, one of those rock and roll moments you remember forever.



RECORD IS REVIEWS

108 - *Songs Of Separation* (Equal Vision, 111 W. 24th Street, 11th Floor Rear, NY, NY 10011-1912). So this is what Krishna Rock sounds like, eh? Well, I care for it about as much as I care for Krishna dogma. That is, not much at all. - Jon Clark

5'10" - *Rodney, Reggie, Emily* (Cargo/Earth Music) - I'm usually wary of new releases by punk rockers of yore, but, yet again, Kevin Seconds proves wrong. This CD is pure powerpop a la the Spinanes. It's catchy and fun, and there's not much any bass. Happy, happy. Get it, especially if you like happy indie pop. - Matt Berland

700 MILES - *Dirtbomb* (RCA) This CD varies in intensity as the boys ponder such deep thoughts as "you lost your innocence/information is a virgin slut" and explored girls who obtain wisdom from beauty magazines. There's also some Guns N Roses style vocals and a mellower instrumental thrown in for balance, but don't go out of your way to hear it. - Tom Brebric

THE AFFECTED - *Fate Worse Than Death* (Frontier/Rubber) Basic four-chord rock n' roll with a very subtle pop-punk flavor. Kinda reminded me of the first Plimsouls album, but not as good and with a real weird guitar sound. The highlight of the record is a cover of the Tommy Tutone classic "867-5309 (Jenny)" which would have been a lot more enjoyable if Doc Hopper hadn't already done it 20 times better. Kind of a waste of a good album title. - Jon C.

ALGEBRA SUICIDE - *Tongue Wrestling* (Widely Distributed, 1412 W Touhy, Chicago IL 60626) This two-piece delivers a very strange mix of influences and sounds, ranging from a kind of Lou Reed thing to an almost Missing Persons kind of sound. Don Hedeker's guitar effects are reminiscent of U2's Dave Evans, but the vocals - where actual singing gives way to Lydia Tomkiw's whining, spoken word delivery - fall way short. Interesting, but a little too talkative for me. - Jeff Scavone.

AL'S FAST FREIGHT - *Murder* (Creation) What a great album for such a mediocre bar band. The music is thick, well-produced arrangements of your average Top 40 rock, ala' Hootie & The Blowfish, the lyrics are hokey and stilted, and the vocals are as yellow as aerosol cheese. Good title, though - it's murder to listen to this. - Johnny Puke

ALL YOU CAN EAT - *Manga!* (WIMP, PO Box 312, Larkspur CA 94977) I always have a hard time describing All You Can Eat. I don't want to call them emo, because that would be insulting. I don't want to call them poppy punk and hardcore doesn't really fit either. I guess if you put all three styles into a blender and mixed them up you'd get AYCE. Along with being a great band, they are really great guys. This CD is a collection of all their releases from comps to EP's to split 7 inches. You can really hear a change in songwriting from their first record to their latest. Twenty great songs that are all worthwhile. This is very high on my recommendation list. - Bob Byrne

ANAL CUNT - *Everyone Should Be Killed* (Earache) Even though three of these tracks are actually some type of song, the other 55 are a bunch of the expected screaming w/ a microphone shoved down yr throat while someone beats somebody up with their guitar type things, which is about all grindcore amounts to. - Dave Urbano

THE BAND DICK TIDROW - *Mr. Dirt Rides Again* (My Man Jeeves, Box 40116, St Paul MN 55104) The Band Dick Tidrow has many influences and you can definitely hear them on this CD. It ranges from heavy bass stuff to 50's rock and roll. The one good thing about this is that a lot of the influences are over done - there's a nice blend of everything which makes this an enjoyable listen from start to finish. - Bob B.

BEATNUTS - *Street Level* (Relativity/Violator) This CD is by the Philly hip hop group Beatnuts. The music is mid paced and not very original; in fact,

nothing really stands out. They talk a lot about drinking and drugs (which I can't relate to) and some of the lyrics seem pretty sexist. There's also a lot of tough guy talk that I find pointless, escapist, and silly. - Mat Gard

BEDHEAD - *When Fun Life Was* (Trance/Touch & Go) I don't really know how to describe this other than silent. I know that sounds silly, but this is very quiet. Long instrumentals that drone on and on, with soft, smooth vocals really make this a challenge to listen to. - Bob B.



BUZZOVEN

BIG DRILL CAR - *No Worse For The Wear* (Headhunter/Cargo) I don't want to be Mr. Prognosticator, but you watch, with the ascension of Green Day and the Offspring, punchy popcore bands will suddenly be the shit. And if there's any justice (which sometimes there is,) BDC will be among the frontrunners. They deliver a pummeling, rhythmic undertow over which

choppy chord patterns alternate with smoking lead signatures. Vocalist Frank Daly not only has one of the most sweetly urgent voices around, but he's also a wildly animated frontman live. A good, solid release and it's got clear/loud production by Allmeisters Bill & Stephan. - Des Jr.

BIG SANDY & THE FLY RITE BOYS - *Jumping From 6 To 6* (Hightone, 220 4th St #101, Oakland CA 94607) This 16 song, Dave Alvin-produced release is a swingin' lounge rockabilly gem. Big Sandy - a greased-hair, suit-wearin' big stud - can croon with the best of 'em. With hooks reminiscent of the Stray Cats and Blasters, jazzy drumming, and a dash of Ry Cooder, Sandy is a gentler, kinder Horton Heat playing classic songs that would have sounded great blasting out of the jukebox at Arnold's. This CD is great to record on the back of a Southern Culture On The Skids party tape. - Frank Phobia

FRANK BLACK - *Teenager Of The Year* (Elektra) The great big prophet teddy bear relays 22 new transmissions in audio-sonic joy for full redemption of the senses. *Teenager of the Year* contains the easily accessible 'Headache' along with such alms as 'Speedy Marie' in which the Black man bows before art and motivation in the best thank you I have ever felt. And as if he would never think of exploring new ground, 'Calistan' can't escape the relaxation of sounding similar to Dire Straits' 'Sultans of Swing' - Black humor in full force. I could rant and rave for issues to come, but I prefer to stop and listen, and leave with Frank taking me by the hand for a silly double backflip smile wide. Make it a point to get this album before the aliens swing back by and pick him up. And remember, you will be tested on the material. Thanks Jim. - Greg Matherly

BLACK TRAIN JACK - *You're Not Alone* (Roadrunner) This CD has a certain flow to it - melodic positive power-pop punk. This is straight edge that doesn't lecture, but then it doesn't exactly do much to motivate either. It sounded better on the second spin, but even with the aggressive vocals and crunchy power chords, this Train just didn't get me to my desired musical destination. - Tom B.

BLOW POPS - *American Beauties* (Get Hip, PO Box 666, Canonsburg PA 15317) The early Beatles and the Monkees are reference points, to be sure, but these post-mod bubblegum popsters incorporate so many 60's influences into these 16 tracks that it's impossible to list them all - Hollies, Turtles, Lovin Spoonful, Tommy James... What's more, they write intelligent and meaningful lyrics, not an easy task when you're also composing melodies that are as every bit as infectious as "Sugar Sugar." - Jim Testa

BLUDGERS / FREE RANGE CHICKEN - Split CD (Hammerhead, 41 E University Ave, Champaign IL 61820) Fighting Illini from the stomping grounds of the Poster Children. With the Bludgers, we're given a mellow, Uncle Tupelo/Counting Crows approach. The homage to the Champaign-like town of Columbia, MO (where I spent the summer, incidentally) has an upbeat, catchy tempo. Later there's more Counting Crows, with some Big Head Todd mellowness thrown in. Free Range Chicken offers a faster, more offbeat, fast-paced rock sound with crazy guitars and fun-punk lyrics. I prefer the Bludgers but this is 70 minutes of good tuneage overall. - Jamie Turner

BONE CLUB - *Bellow* (Rocket Sound, Box 40397, St Paul MN 55104) Sabbath, man!! Tailored for the alternative crowd, of course. It gets boring to me but if 70's cock rock is your cup of tea... - Matt B.

BRACKET - *Forestville Avenue* (Caroline) Bracket is Caroline's entry in the Pop Punk Sweepstakes, a young SoCal combo who sound like Green Day. The NJ Pop Kids love this band so I'm willing to hold my reservations in check. (I have it on good authority these kids have been playing this kind of music since junior high, so it's not like they heard Dookie and went out and started a band - although it sure seems like that sometimes...) If you want something catchy with a good beat, I guess you could do worse. - Jim T.

DAVID BROZA, *Second Street*, (November Records, 530 Broadway, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10012) This CD would fit quite nicely into the rotation of "lite rock" radio stations all over the country. It's got slick production, professional arrangements, and sweet harmonies. In short, everything that makes it ready for mass market appeal. To be fair, Broza does have a nice voice and plays guitar well, and would be a decent folk performer. But on the few cuts that start out nice and acoustically, over-production kicks in to destroy the mood. - Paul Silver

BUGJUICE - *Que Val* (Ringin' Ear Records) The first song "Adventure Has Its Price" sounds like a mix between an English pop band and some rougher American band such as Firehose. Track #2, "See?", sounds like the local band Mars Needs Women, which to use a comparison for Bugjuice sounds like a cleaned up version of some old-school Sub Pop

grungy band. They also stick some pipe banging in there somewhere. Otherwise the cd has some tightly written guitar and bass leaded by the vocals. Pretty decent. - Dave U

BULKHEAD - *Gas Giants* (Shimmy Disc) I must say I like reviewing anything on vinyl; the sound has a certain analog quality that no cd or DAT can reproduce. These guys fill this piece of wax pretty well, like King Missile mixed with the Vapors (they did that song "Turning Japanese" about masturbation.) Which by the way this band does not do- just good song after good song. - Dave U.

CADILLAC TRAMPS - *It's Alright* (Dr. Dream Records, 841 W. Collins, Orange, CA 92667) During some of these cuts, I found myself wondering when the video clip would show up on "Beavis and Butthead". During others, I found my body involuntarily moving to the beat. Some cuts are plain awful, like "Wreckage", sounding way too slick for my tastes, while others, such as "No Reason" are downright catchy pop-punkish stuff. The styles range all over the place, from dreary rock ballad to hard rock to hard rock to punkish power pop. I found the album on the whole to be a bit too slickly produced, though. A mixed bag here. - Paul S.

CHARLES BROWN SUPERSTAR (Mighty Records, 6607 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA, 90028) The sounds of Japanese culture turned on by technology and Gary Neuman. These few songs are barely enough to sample the taste of the new electro-pop superstar. In a niche all its own, but destined to carve out more. You should hear this in a not-as-yet-scene but soon-to-be-hip dance hall. Become exposed before someone exposes you. - Greg M.

BUZZOVEN - *Sore* (Roadrunner) Basically a continuation of the sound of "To A Frown" only better produced. So if you like Buzzoven's brand of pound and pummel (which I very much do,) you will not be disappointed. Includes a great snapshot of the jolly Kirk Fischer with his face a crimson mask. And beware the last track on the disc! - Des Jr.

CHERUBS - *Heroin Man* (Trance Syndicate, Box 49771, Austin TX 78765) Really funny album cover. Sort of tasteless but in a weird way, funny. It has a man laying down dead in a bathtub. Despite the depressing cover art, the music inside is uplifting, a mix of early Mudhoney with the wild vocals and muddy bass mixed in with screeching guitars. Not really grunge or punk, but very raw. - Bob B.

CHUCK DUKOWSKI, PAUL CUTLER, BILL STINSON - *U.G.M.* (New Alliance) Say hello to United Gang Members. Don't worry these homeboys aren't packin' 9's or down with OPP (although the first track is entitled "Yo, Motherfucka.") They're just some rockin' dudes you all know and love from the early days of punkin', and now with SST. If you're a fan of Chuck Dukowski, then you'll dig this collaboration. Keepin' D.Boone's spirit alive. - Jamie T.

CHUNE - *Burnt* (Cargo) Chune, who hail from El Cajon, CA, play music in a slow, twangy way. The guitars meander with the noisiness of Sonic Youth and Slint. This CD has a lot of power and emotion, and is ideal for when you just want to kick back and zone. Webster's had no clue what a "chune" is, so you're on your own. - Mat G.

CLAY HENRY - *No Taang For Ted* (O DOOR ABLE WECKORDS, P.O. Box 1862, Tucker, GA (should've known) 30085) After wading through 8 hours of class and boring socialization over at the University, these guys hustled home to play a few hours before Mom had dinner ready. After eating, it was back to the basement to discuss the new 19-song CD that had accrued over 3 years of wading through hours of class and boring socialization (over at the University.) Teddy appreciated how the sporadic changes in the tunes conveyed on the disc while Jeremy was pleased to point out how his drum licks complimented Chris' jingling guitar works. The whole while, Dave was making Elvis Costello jokes. - Greg M.

CONFLICT - *Conclusion* (Cleopatra, 8726 So Sepulveda #082, Los Angeles CA 90045) I was surprised by this. I was waiting to hear an Exploited or GBH style of music, so I was shocked when the first song came on. Wow! Imagine great early 80's hardcore mixed in with some subtle keyboards and very well thought out lyrics. You bet! It's hard to believe but it works, and very well too. All ten songs really stand out and the rough vocals give it an extra punch. The liner notes say they plan to come over to the States in late '94; I know I'll be waiting in line to see them. - Bob B.

CONFLICT BURNING - *self titled* (PO Box 121, Clementon NJ 08021) When I put this on, the first word that sprung to mind was "grunge." But since that word is about as narrowly descriptive as "punk," I guess I'll have to do better. The music that Conflict Burning makes is slow to mid paced, with a lot of wailing, noisy guitars. It sounds chaotic and structured at the same time (do I sound like an idiot with lines like that?) The vocalist sings

deep and powerfully, in sort of the same style as Pearl Jam or maybe Outface. - Mat Gard

CORAL - Pillowtalk - (Cargo/Fistpuppet) Bob Schick's high nasal vocals may grate on your nerves after a while, but if you listen hard enough you might just hear the FIREHOSE jr. element in Coral. There aren't really enough amazing songs here to make this anyone's favorite album, but the few standouts would sound real good on a mix tape. "Soup N Sandwiches" and "Lil' Buddy" sort of hint at the potential their single had, but twelve bucks is expensive for two songs. - Jodi Shapiro

CORDUROY - Lisp (Broken Rekids) The only thing memorable about this is that there's a song called "Jan-Michael Vincent". And nobody really remembers who he was. - Jodi S.

CRO MAGS - The Age Of Quarrel (Profile) Jeez, where to start? The Cro-Mags were one of the scariest things going in NYC. They were the hardest bad-assed tattooed motherfuckers on the island. So why did I go to them religiously for years? Because they were the best fucking hardcore band ever. Profile has re-released their first two LP's on one CD. *Age Of Quarrel*, the first, is a fucking assault on the senses. The band's style, which mixes old Bad Brains style punk, hardcore, and tinges of metal, is at its most powerful here. *Best Wishes* was always a big disappointment to me. Vocalist John Bloodclot had left, and while the music was powerful in places, it was a little limp in others. And plus, Harley's vocals just didn't make the grade. So while this is definitely a step up from the first part to the second, it is still awesome to have *Age Of Quarrel* finally out on CD. Oh yeah, John Bloodclot and Mackie still get together sometimes to play a set of old "Age" songs. It is not to be missed. And while you're at it, have someone tape you the demo. - Matt G.

CROWN ROAST - A Nose Has May Jobs (Unclean, Box 49737, Austin TX 78765) Crown Roast are chaotic and noisy. The guitars and drums lay a fast and heavy beat, with just the right amount of fuzz. The vocalist screams in a fast and murderous way, like a crazy person. The whole thing comes off feeling crazy and sick, like good music should. - Matt G.

CUCUMBERS - Where We Sleep Tonight (Zero Hour, 1600 Broadway #701, New York NY 10019) Back in the mid 80's, the Cucumbers were a catchy post-punk pop band with catchy, danceable songs that had a bit of a buzz going in the NY club scene. Then the two band's two principal members, Jon Fried and Deena Shoskes, had a couple of babies and moved to the suburbs. Now they're back, with Deena's frisky, playful vocals still dancing on top of Jon's catchy riffs, and with this sort of bright, hummable New Wave stuff suddenly back in fashion, the Cukes are not only still making great music, they're even trendy again. - Jim T.

CYNICS, Get Our Way (Get Hip Recordings, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317) The Cynics are back with seventeen cuts of psychedelic garage rock and roll. From start to finish, there's not a stinker in the bunch. This CD is loaded with all the fuzz and rawness we've come to expect from great garage punk, even though it wanders into jangly 60s style pop here and there (but in a good way). Highly recommended for fans of the genre (like me). - Paul S.

D.I. - State Of Shock (Dr. Dream) These SoCal punk/HC mainstays are back with more of the same stuff that made them cool to begin with. For those of you not as ancient as I am, these are the fine gentlemen who brought us "Richard Hung Himself" and "Johnny's Got A Problem" back in the early 80's, and made their film debut in *Suburbia*. No new ground broken here, just enough two-minute ditties to fill this half-hour long CD, but I liked it. - Tom B.

DAMBUILDERS - Encendedor (East/West) What separates this Boston-based, college radio-ready band from the other alternative pop flooding the market? A few things. First off, they can write clever, moody, intelligent songs without seeming pompous. Secondly, the 'builders have a secret weapon - Joan Wasser, a possessed violinist who adds textures and vibes to already pleasing ditties. At times, she attacks the violin like her worst enemy, making the instrument scream for mercy, but on other songs, like "Slo-Mo Kikaida," she soothes and calms. This CD is a great way to spend a quiet hour when you just can't stomach anymore grunge or lo-fi hell. - Frank P.

DEAD SUSAN - Dead Susan EP (124 Oxford Hill Lane, Havertown PA 19083) This mid-tempo, emotional release ponders questions of childhood abandonment, hatred, and dysfunctional love. Pearl Jam anyone? Despite their obvious influences (the Doors is another one,) this is actually a decent

release by this group showing a lot of potential. - Tom B.

DEVIL DOGS - Choad Blast (Empty, PO Box 12034, Seattle WA 98102) Wow. Down & dirty punk rock 'n roll, complete with handclaps, influenced by the Ramones and Clash and yet attaining its own originality. Tunes are short enough to hold even the shortest attention spans but long enough to break a sweat. I could only imagine the live energy this band must deliver. A winner. - J.Turri

D.I. - State Of Shock (Dr. Dream) "Jesus!", I said, "A new D.I. record?!" Before I listened to it, I mentioned to my friend and he moaned. Then I gave it a good listen and... it's pretty good! It's better than the old D.I. records that I remember, and it has most of the original members. I actually listened to this more than once! It's pretty rock, but it's definitely D.I. My big complaint: You're not supposed to cover "Lexicon Devil," especially when the Germs did it better. And it's way, way, way too slick. - Matt B.

DIESELMEAT - Happily (American Empire) Their bio looks impressive - Mucky Pup's bassist, the amazing Gobblehoof's old guitar player, and guest performances by the likes of J Mascis and members of Sebadoh. But as much as I tried to enjoy this, I couldn't help thinking that it sounded like an MTV serenade. There is decent music here at times, although more often than not the lyrics take themselves way too seriously (all those songs about the same old girlfriend reminded me of those Jason Priestly Pepe jeans commercials) and after a while the formula just gets thin. - Danny E.

DIFFERENCE ENGINE - Breadmaker (La-di-da America, Box 202, NY NY



FIGGS

10009-9998) I'm not sure what the name of this band is, I want it to be Breadmaker. But no matter what, it lends itself to be English European guitar wash akin to that of Velocity Girl - lots of chorus and flange on the guitar mixed with other effects, layered with Female Vocals that sound a little bit like Enya along with some other male vocals singing along too. The drumming is happy and busy. Hey, this could be your thing! - Dave U.

dirtclodlight - Suffering The Aftertaste (Flipside) Humm, describing music is a real challenge sometimes. This band is a strange mix of a lot of different influences - a bit of glam metal, a little AC/DC, a little Nirvana, add some heavy guitars, and you get dirtclodlight. Perhaps the best way I can describe this is that it reminds me of music that stodgy old people might listen to in order to understand today's crazy youth. - Mat G.

DIS - M386.D57 1994 (12 Inch) Milwaukee's Dis exceed the promises they made on their last effort, *Small Fry*. Better sound, better songs, better playing. Dis draw on a lot of influences like early New Order, Tar and Hum, but sound like none of them. They can be slow and moody if they want to be, even melodic and heavy. "The Nischkes" and "Her Daughter's Friends" are just two reasons to get this. - Jodi S.

DISGUST - Brutality Of War (Earache) Ex-members of Discharge play Discharge-type tunes, only faster. It's pretty good but sometimes loses that catchy element that real Discharge always had. Fast and heavy, even with the unnecessary soloing and little metal riffs. Overall, it's not a bad CD. Did

I mention Discharge? - Matt B.

DIZBUSTER - *Gun Lighter Cricket* (Get Hip Recordings, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317) This is a band pulled in two directions at one time. ■ sounds like they can't make up their minds whether they want to play garage rock and roll or hard rock/metal, and the resulting compromise just doesn't work for me. One other note: they need to learn to vary the tempo ■ bit. It seems they only know how to play two tempos, fast and slow. As ■ result, all of the songs start to sound alike after awhile. - Paul S.

DOC HOPPER - *Aloha* (Reservoir Records, PO Box 790366, Middle Village NY 11379) This is the vinyl version of Doc Hopper's lp on Ringing Ear that ■■■ previously only available on CD and cassette. Doc Hopper are a really great band that play some of the best power pop punk around. ■ 12 songs (this vinyl version has one bonus track) ■■ ■ winners, with great drivin' guitars. The vocals ■■ really good because most pop/punk bands have singers with whiney, nasal voices, or singers who try to copy Joey Ramone. Not here. Chris Pierce (ex-AG's, Sinkhole) has ■ raw voice which really makes this stand out amongst the hundreds of other bands doing this. Pick this ■■ up. - Bob B.

DOG'S LIFE - *Queenie Gets A Pinworm* (160 Linden St, Rochester NY 14620) Somewhere in-between ska and surf pop. The lyrics ■■ fun, just like the music. Good for ■ drive down the coast. - J.Turri

DOWN BY LAW - *punkrockacademyflightsongs* (Epitaph) A rejuvenated Dave Smalley leads the newest (and by my reckoning, youngest) version of Down By Law through an energetic and eclectic album of - ■■ the title suggests - feisty punk rock. Smalley still has that patented ■■ yowl and is still singing songs about keeping the edge and being true to yourself (although he also rights the best boy-loves-girl punk songs around.) The secret weapon here is ■■ drummer Hunter Oswald, who wrote about half the songs and sings like Tim "Lint" Armstrong (of Rancid and Op Ivy fame,) with ■■ raspy guttersnipe yelp and enough attitude to sink ■■ luxury liner full of major label A&R geeks, making this the most *punk rock* Down By Law disc to date. - Jim T.

DROVERS - *Kill Mice Elf* (Tantrum) I've always wanted to ■■ a film critic ■■ I guess the next best thing would be to critique a band that's been in the movies. You have have ■■ Chicago's Blarney Stone rockers in Madeline Stowe's *Blink* (for which they also provided the soundtrack) or Ron Howard's fireman flick *Backdraft*. Before becoming movie stars, though, the Celtic Irish bit ■■ apparently their sole claim to fame, although ■■ this lp, I picked up ■■ much stronger Beatles/Sgt. *Pepper* sound than anything else. Last year ■■ a Grateful Dead show, I hung out in the parking lot with about 300 hippies and music like this ■■ coming from everyone who had a set of bongos and ■■ wooden flute. Yeah, it's pleasant enough, and not surprisingly, big with Deadheads. I suppose if you're into the trippy neo-acid sound, it wouldn't hurt to check them out. - Danny E.

EARTH EIGHTEEN - *Earth Eighteen* (Futurist, 6 Green St, New York NY 10013) Five 21st-Century tracks reminiscing ELO and early Bowie with ■■ slow- mo industrial tinge. Electronic music remains the only way to liven up ■■ retrogressive age. Earth Eighteen balance the two well in ■■ planet- shaking Beatles-esque bravery. Featuring an electro-pop remix just perfect for grooving into the 22nd century. - Greg M.

END POINT - *After Taste* (Doghouse) Straightedge soft-core. Twelve songs, the best being "Withness," with a strong anti-racial message. I ■■ impressed with the vocals, the singer actually tries to sing which is unusual with SXE hardcore. The guitars ■■ screechy and a little metallish in parts. It's cool if you're on the borderline of alternative and pop/punk. - Drunk Jason

EO - *High* EP (Rhythmolife, 245 8th Ave #102, NYC 10011) Fun and lively alternative college muzak with notably exceptional female vocals by Erin O'Hara. Packed with emotion and purity, reminiscent of Natalie Merchant's style. Fiddles, fun, and frolicking combine to make this ■■ excellent EP. - Jamie T.

EVERY 13 DAYS - *E'tant Donne's* (Honey Puller Records, P.O. Box 391, Buffalo, NY, 14215) Pseudo-psychedelic combo-music fit for ■■ journey through Spain to eat at Donnie's (???) No really, its there ■■ god? Ask Donne. Classical guitar work appears periodically signifying great lyrical relevance. Doesn't it? What's relevant is Spain, dammit. Wait, don't get ■■ off track here. It's all because of no available passports for disinterested immigrants. Shit, shut up! What I'm trying to say here is this

'visionary' banality doesn't hold my attention for very long. If you ■■ things in mediocrity and complacent groove, get ■■ copy. - Greg M.

EVERY DAMN DAY *Jettison The Pod Sparky* (PO Box 2111 Montclair NJ 07042) ■■ Daly and John Reynolds of *The Aquarian Weekly* make up part of this four-piece that's been ■■ on the local club ■■ for some time now. Most of their melodic songs center around women troubles in a basic guitar rock 'n roll style. I caught them live and their sound ■■ less clean sounding than on this CD. - Tom B.

EVIL MOTHERS - *Pitchforks ■■ Perverts* (Invisible) These boys from my hometown of San Antonio, Texas crunch out more chunky metal on their second big release, with ■■ of a Ministry (and labelmates Pigface) twinge. Powerful, angry punk - Hell, yeah. Rock on, dudes. If you love skull-crushing metal-punk, listen up. - Jamie T.

FAR SIDE - *Rigged* (Revelation) In the last year or so Revelation Records has changed formats, ■■ to say. First they only put out New York hardcore stuff; now, they put out bands with very diverse musical styles. FAR SIDE definitely fit with the new Revelation Records. I heard their first EP years ago and it was pretty good, sort of mid tempo hardcore with a slight ■■ edge to it. I missed their last LP but the newest release, *Rigged*, took ■■ by surprise. It is really good. I still can't see this on Revelation though, it has too much of an upbeat, poppy sound like Green Day but it isn't really "punk" or "hardcore," it just stands out by itself. It has the feel of the newer 7 Seconds material, with soft vocals that flow perfectly with the music. The only downfall for this release is that ■■ of the songs sound alike, but besides that this is really good. - Bob B.

FIFTEEN - *Buzz* (Grass) I swear, Fifteen just keeps getting ■■ and more trippy. Follow the progression of their records from Crimpshrine to the Grateful Dead. I'm not saying I don't like it. I do, it's good, but they definitely need to stop listening to Jimi Hendrix and the Grateful Dead. Definitely a keeper to listen to on those ■■ sunny days with your girlfriend or boyfriend. - Matt B.

FIGGS - *Low-Fi At Society High* (Imago) Shaggy power-pop with a New Wave beat, with plenty of power-pop ■■ ups about cars, girls, and yr favorite shirt. "Step Back, Let's Go Pop," goes the first song, and the Figgs do just that for the whole friggin' CD. Way cool and lots of fun. Play loud and pogo. - Jim T.

FINAL WARNING - "Eyes of a Child" CD EP -(Tribal War; P.O. Box 20712; Tompkins Sq. Stn.; New York, NY 10009) Punk rock anarchist crust discharge core. It's played well, but sometimes comes closer to metal. Personally, it's not my cup of tea, seeing as it's not very original, and to tell the truth, I think I'd rather just play some old Discharge records instead. - Matt B.

FLOUR - *Fourth ■■ Final* (Touch & Go) This is my first exposure to this outfit. The opening track lets all the instruments click in ■■ by ■■ and the second cut wields an off-the-wall Xmas ■■ effect in the chorus. Beyond that, this disc just kinda sits there. - Des Jr.

FLY ASHTRAY - *Tone Sensations Of The Wonder Men* (PO Box 1176, New York NY 10276) Fly Ashtray take the listener on an 18 song rock 'n roll voyage with guitar-heavy/vocal light mixes and ■■ alternafeel. The song titles ■■ ■■ verbose as the ■■ of the album, including one which runs twelve words. Wow! All the songs are short and I kinda started grooving with ■■ of the neater guitar licks. A commendable effort. - Jamie T.

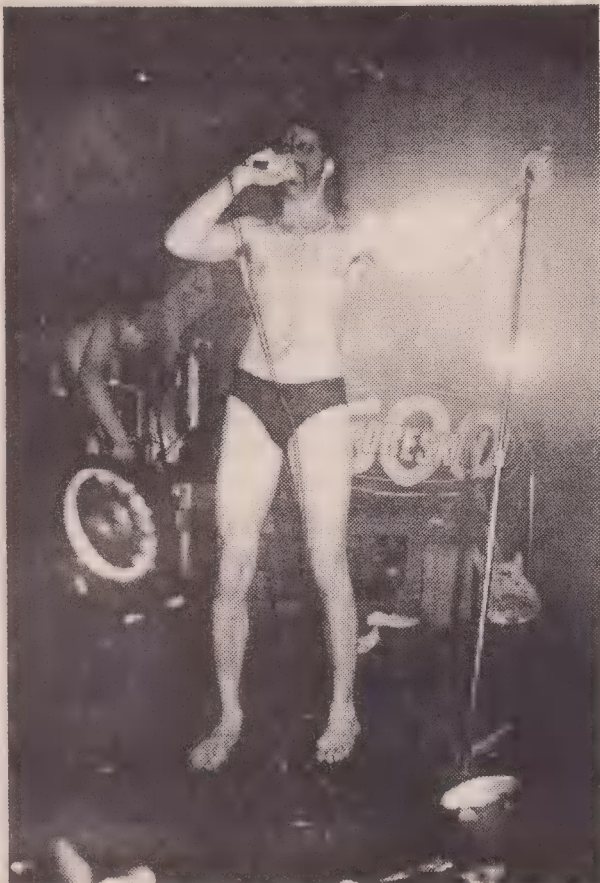
FORESKIN 500 "Highway 69" picture disc (Basura, Box 39789) An ex-Warlock Pincher and a bunch of other weird Denver folk produce ■■ rock-hard throbber that unintentionally reminded ■■ of latterday White Zombie. This song put to video would get them ■■ Headbangers ball. Take that as you will. - Des Jr.

FORESKIN ■■ - *Manpussy* (Basura) Foreskin 500 borrow the Warlock Pincher's live shtick - lots of smoke, lots of lights, very little clothing - but not that group's wicked ■■ of humor or funky rap beats. Instead this is heavyhanded hardrock slobber without any distinguishing riffs or melodies (or lyrics.) I'm ■■ Beavis & Butthead would dig the band's groovy satanic stage show but even those two braindead headbangers would probably agree this sucks. Heh heh. - Jim T.

FRETBANKET - *Junfuel* (Atlas/A&M) The most American-sounding British punk band you'll ■■ hear has ■■ lead singer who sings like a cross between Kurt Cobain and Jawbreaker's ■■ S., and ■■ guitarist who writes songs like a cross between classic Bad Religion and the Plimsouls. Classy lyrics, great beats, hooks that don't stop... ■■ impressive debut all the way through. - Jim T.

FURTHER - *Sometimes Chimes* (Christmas Records, 1310 1/2 N Vista, Los Angeles CA 90046) Ok, there ■■■ 25 songs here and the CD clocks in at 75+ minutes. I'm not sure if this was intentional, but things seemed kinda stretched here. The recording quality isn't very good at all and many of the songs sound similar. Musically, I guess they're going for a Sonic Youth/Buttholes thing, with spacey, distorted guitars that veer between screechy and poppy. The vocals are often muffled. The whole package was annoying to listen to. - Mat G.

GAMEFACE - *Good* (Network Sound, 2424 Greenacre, Anaheim, CA 92801) After being thoroughly impressed by these guys on their 1992 tour, it ■■■ long wait for this many-times-delayed CD to arrive. Still, it ■■■ worth the wait. There's a definite Big Drill Car influence here, both in the vocal phrasing and in the guitar playing, but they also remind me a lot of ■■■ of my favorite unknown bands, Minneapolis' Porcelain Boys with their youthful pop-punk exuberance. My favorite songs ■■■ "Only One," "Organization," "Friday Matinee," and "Retraction," though the secret last track is cool too... - Jon Clark



FORESKIN 530

GASTR dEL SOL - *Crookt, Crakt, or Fly* (Drag City) No rock here, just ■■■ sloppy flamenco-like guitar playing that's sometimes accompanied by annoying vocals spewing pretentious avant-garde poetry-art crap. Yuck. - Jon C.

GIFT - EP (Tim Kerr, Box 42433, Portland OR 97242) I'm not totally ■■■ what's going on here. Ex-Poison Idea folks Jerry A. and Slayer Hippy team up with a chick with pipes and make power pop. I only really perk up when Ms. May-May del Castro (bass 'n vox) steps up for her turn at the mic (she and Jerry trade off lead vocals.) It's not bad, kinda strange, but Poison Idea it's not. - Des Jr.

GIGOLO AUNTS - *Flippin' Out* (RCA) British audiences eat this band up, but I suspect this CD isn't going to find much of an American audience. These guys are the stuff that indie cults are made of, regurgitating every little riff from their way cool record collections (Big Star, Velvet Crush, Velvet Underground, early REM) with just enough of ■■■ spin to make it all sound new

again. But on *Flippin' Out*, their sound is way too polished and plastic to appeal to indie ears, and still too catchy and offbeat for the mainstream. A couple of the tunes here ■■■ worth keeping around ("Cope" and "Bloom," especially) but I suspect in ten years this band will be appearing on the 14th volume of *Yellow Pills'* power-pop compilations, somewhere between the Windbreakers and the Bongos. - Jim T.

GREG GINN - *Let It Burn* (Cruz; P.O. Box 7756; Long Beach, CA 90807)- Hmm. I listened to the first song and I was unimpressed. This album is really varied. Sometimes it's bad techno with weird guitar solos, and other times it's punk rock (I even noticed a bit of ska once). On the whole, it sort of annoys me, but I know a lot of people who would probably go ga-ga over ■■■ of the songs. Hmm. - Matt B.

GREG GINN - "Don't Tell ■■■ (Remixes)" (Cruz Records, PO Box 7756, Long Beach CA 90807) I will be so kind ■■■ to put away my personal vendetta against the heartless Mr. Ginn so as to give ■■■ fair musical review to those who desire it... well, I'll try anyway. This E.P. contains three remixes from his latest album "Dick" and one from ■■■ previous L.P. Industrial, dance inspired mixes (Not unlike ■■■ Jim Thurwell creation) of standard Ginn guitar songs. Do you remember "The Process of Weeding Out"?... I'm sorry. The singing is um... undeniable. Imagine ■■■ Duce (Of Mentors fame) screaming ■■■ about three xanax. If Greg Ginn is just ahead of his time, I hope I die before it arrives. Oh well, I never made any promises. - Greg M.

GLOO GIRLS - *Attention Shoppers!* (Celluloid, 180 Varick St., 14th Floor, NY, NY 10014). This sounds like something that should have come out in 1983, when bands like the Waitresses and B-52's were in their heyday. Two women vocalists trade off silly lyrics about witches, cross-dressers, and Barbie backed by minimalist new ■■■ pop and lots of samples. Not really my cup of tea, but I am impressed with their brevity (10 songs in 20 minutes!). - Jon C.

GLUE GUN - *Itch* (Snob Hill, 28 1/2 Laidlaw Ave, Jersey City NJ 07306) Noli Novak, the "Croatian Catwoman," fronts this quartet with much enthusiasm. She makes the band's live performances into ■■■ theatrical stagemus. "Siberia" ■■■ of my favorites because of its cool pauses, and the way it demonstrates Noli's vocal range as she screams with pain and an end of beliefs. No lyrics ■■■ provided for "Gone With Bura," but ■■■ who speaks Croatian, I ■■■ intrigued. - Tom B.

GODHEADSILO, "The Scientific Supercake LP" (Kill Rock Stars, 120 NE State #418, Olympia, WA 98506) Everyone keeps telling me that this band is the shit live, but I guess it doesn't translate too well to vinyl or something. This is distorted, noisy, droning stuff. The vocals are extremely distorted and buried deep in the mix, so they're hard to hear. This ■■■ so uninteresting ■■■ put ■■■ to sleep. - Paul S.

GOOPS - (Blackout) Late-70's styled punk, like a cross between X and X Ray Spex. Fishnet stocking-clad Eleanora belts out straight-forward bitchy gems like "All My Friends Are Dead" and ponders the last time her dad beat her on "Booze Cabana." These Lower East Side punkers are produced by Don Fury and worth a listen. - Tom B.

GRAVEL PIT - *Crash Land* (Fearlette) These New Haven, CT balladeers come up with some slow-tempo harmonizing - good music to clean your room to on a lazy rainy day. - Tom B.

GREEN MACHINE - *Sonic Lobotomy* (Prospective, Box 6425, Minneapolis MN 55406) Time warp! These boys have broken out the old Cramps, Germs, and Gun Club records and then used those influences to make ■■■ good album - 75 minutes of action-packed fun with only ■■■ few duds, the results of veering off into unwise musical directions. When Green Machine stick to their guns, they hit the nail on the head. - Jamie T.

GRIFTERS - *Crappin' You Negative* (Shangri-La) Memphis ain't just the home o' Graceland. Get used to the notion that the Grifters ■■■ god-like and put out ■■■ of the wierdest, noisiest lo-fi pop you'll ever hear. "Rats" is ■■■ excellent choice for ■■■ opening track, and pretty ■■■ the drawling vocals will have you hooked. Parts of this were recorded in a parking garage, others in 4-track. "Get Out Of Your Spaceship And Fight Like A Man" wins for best title of the year. Any band with ■■■ bassist named Tripp is cool. Groove to "Holmes". Cry to "Black Fuel Incinerator". Buy two copies, 'cos you'll ■■■ out one. - Jodi S.

GRIPWEEDS - *House Of Vibes* (Ground Up, PO Box 1721, New Brunswick NJ 08903) NJ's free-spirited poppy rockers are back with more groovy harmonies mixed with ■■■ psychedelic pop. For the most part, this album is palatable but falls short in some of the energy and fun that ■■■ evident on previous efforts. They opt instead for ■■■ more harmonious, 70's guitar-rock streak that I personally don't find as enjoyable as some of their other

influences. - Jamie T.

GROOVE DOGS - (Tracer, PO Box 16026, Augusta GA 30910) Southern rock n roll with plenty of jangle and hooks. There's an almost country appeal to the vocals, mixed together well with a Gin Blossoms solid-rock sensibility. Hooky and fun. - Jamie T.

GROOVY COOLS - *Charleston Voodoo* (Strugglebaby, 2612 Erie Ave, Cincinnati OH 45208) In between the steak 'n eggs breakfasts of major label and the peanut butter dinners of indie obscurity, there exists a strange netherworld that's home to the Groovy Cools. The Cools have remained one of the top-drawing bar-rock bands in the South for years and have reached a level of that many bands more nationally renowned would envy. The unfortunate side of this is that it's the very comfort financial success bands enjoy on this dubious circuit prevents exceptional bands the Cools from touring far beyond their home base or bothering to get their records national distribution. And you, Mr. Rock Fan, are the loser.

It's this disparity that can be applied to the production of *Charleston Voodoo*. It's obvious that a great deal of time and money was spent on this collection of excellent songs, but it's also obvious that the Cools need a real producer. With the proper turn of a few knobs, this could have been less of a merely impressive regional release and more of a pop souvenir not too distant from the old Hoboken popsters like the Bongos or dBs.

A final note about the songwriting of lead singer Jim Orr. Orr's lyrics provide vivid descriptions seen through the eyes of a depressed optimist, with an interesting fixation on all things to do with water ("Water My Soul" is a beautiful exercise in verse.) Even the cliché-titled "Love Left To Be Made," Orr manages to turn the rote into the extraordinary. If you happen on a copy of *Charleston Voodoo*, pick it up, but more importantly, this band live and go up and say "hi." They're usually just playing for idiots. - Johnny P.

GUMBALL - *Gumball* (Sony) A release with a little more humming appeal to it. Sort of struck a less noisy Dino Jr. with catchiness. Groovy. - Jamie T.

GWAR - *This Toilet Earth* (Metal Blade) Gwar's perfect medium is the stage, or better yet, video presentations like 1992's "Phallus In Wonderland" opus. But when left without the visuals and given solely the aural aspects, this stuff holds together like Band on a sliced jugular. These actors (and they are actors) haven't produced a tune as catchy as "Slaughterama" or "The Salmonizer" in years. However, the two Beefcake sung tunes have a driving, Accused feel and do stand out. Otherwise you're left with dopey thrashers about Saddam Hussein and delivery room sex. On the plus side, they finally have a really good drummer. - Des Jr.

HEADCLEANER - *Head Of The Next One* (Big Deal, Box 2072, NY NY 10009) From the photo on the inside sleeve, I could tell what Headcleaner would sound like. It's hard to describe so let's say artsy fartys noise/alternative music. Lots of heavy bass with weird guitar noises, lots of talking between the singing, with a singer who sounds like Sam McPheeters of Born Against. There's really nothing interesting about this aside that it was well produced. - Bob B.

HEAVY VEGETABLE - *The Amazing Underseas Adventures Of Aqua Kitty And Friends* (Cargo/Headhunter) First of all, the artwork on this CD is There are tons of pictures of a kitty superimposed over undersea scenes. It's hilarious (but perhaps not to a non-cat person.) [How right you are, Mat - Ed.] The music reminds a lot of what Lush would sound like if one of the vocalists was male. Mid-paced and strummy, while the vocalists-one male and female - sound really spacey. The lyrics are pretty spacey as well. - Mat G.

HELIOS CREED - *Busting Through The Van Allen Belt* (Cleopatra, 8726 So Sepulveda, Suite D-82, Los Angeles, CA, 90045) Well, hell, heaven and every place in between. Here is a installment of Helios Creed now busting through the Van Allen with excessive force and temptation. If you not familiar with such surreptitious missions of the Creed, I can tell you very little (initiatory rules you understand.) This album borrows the skills of Jon and Andrew Weiss for the transmission and manipulation of the listener's central nervous system. Skinny-alien-sex-hawk-esque. Turn your next party completely around with this one. - Greg M.

HELMET - *Betty* (Interscope) The problem with Helmet before was that all their songs sounded the same: Huge sledgehammer riffs that hit you over the head. On their second big-label outing, the band tries to open up their sound, but everything they try just sounds wrong - lumbering funk riffs, cheeseey space-music interludes, psychedelic guitar solos. Bring back the old one-trick-pony Helmet. I'd rather have a headache than an upset stomach. - Jim T.

HEMLOCK - "Dry Socket" (Meat Records, Box 460692, Escondido CA 92046)

Hard-edged punk crashes at you in this sometimes enjoyable, sometimes amateurish release. The undercurrent of acitivity contrasted with slower, more mellow sections is neat and all, but the vocalist must learn to do more than growl during the more aggro parts. - Jamie T.

HIDDEN PERSUADERS - *Fate* (12-10 31st Dr #3, Long Island City NY 11106) Here's a hint for local bands: It's not a good idea for your press release to state that your product has "earned universal praise from critics," this only invites pessimistic bastards such as myself to scrutinize said product more carefully. This CD features an eclectic bunch of musicians doing a commercial rock thing with a funky backdrop. Another one to file in the Mediocre pile. - Tom B.

HORSIES - *Trouble Down South* (Austin Throwdown, PO Box 650196, Austin TX 78765) This is a novel concept - wild & unity island-type rhythms with heavy groove riffs and serious helpings of sugar-sweet female vox. By golly, I really liked this in spots, but has low points too. The music grows on you the more you listen, but the name of the band sure doesn't. - Jamie T.

HUMPERS - *Journey To The Centre Of Your Wallet* (Sympathy For The Record Industry, 4901 Virginia St, Long Beach CA 90805) These guys are Flipside's favorite current band. It's easy to see why - they kick out some seriously raving punk/rock jams. The Humpers set foot on each step of the spiral staircase and you can hear all from Chuck Berry to MC5 thru Dictators, Dolls, Ramones and Samoans. My only complaint (and I somewhat got over it eventually) is that the singer is rather tuneless and can barely keep pace with the band's intensity. Beyond that, this cranks. - Des Jr.

IGGY POP - *TV Eye Live 1977* (Capitol) I don't know about the rest of you old school punks from the days before Iggy came across a middle-aged Marky Mark flexing his oh-so-sinewy box, but when my older brother heard about this release, his excitement was unbridled. The 8-song treasure contains well-produced (for live) tracks from several 1977 shows, and oh what tracks they are. This is Iggy's post-Stooges best, with "TV Eye," "I Wanna Be Your Dog," "Funtime," and more. Just buy the damn thing and find out how punk you really are. Just don't store this anywhere near that hip Dig disc. There might be spontaneous combustion. - Jamie T.

ICEBOXERS - *Science Won't Save Us* (Gods Man Music, 46 Edgeworth St #408, Worchester MA 01605) The singer is just as corny as they come, and the music segues between contemporary jazz hooked in with Devo rock & Duran Duran reggae without any real mixing of musical influences from one part to the next. - Dave U.

INDIAN BINGO (Rockville) Poignant melodies that go well in a dimly lit room, pre-slumber. They remind me of a good old fashioned night club act where everyone has a tab and nobody minds hearing Frank Sinatra's "Dream Away" just one more time before closing. Middle-aged poetic sensibilities that go down like liquid Valium. If you don't like it, Dad will. - Greg M.

THE INSOMNIACS 10-inch (Estrus Records, P.O. Box 2125, Bellingham WA 98227) New Jersey's Insomniacs go for a garagey, British Invasion-derived sound here, romping through five of their own songs and one that actually dates back to 1965. Robert Wojciechowski drags distorted leads and bouncy chord runs out of his guitar, while brother (or father or uncle or something -- they've got the same last name) David pounds bass and Michael Sinacchi drums. All three sing, trading call and response on the choruses like they're going to break into "Twist and Shout" or something any moment. The best title is the opener, "Walpurgis Urges;" the cover is "You Make It Move," credited to H. Blaiky. -- Gangloff

JACK O'FIRE - *The Destruction of Squaresville* (Estrus) Psycho blues bellowing through bare-assed raw bar covers of Joy Division, Howlin' Wolf, Negative Approach, Small Faces and more. Guttural and malicious, Jack 'Fire recognized that rock and roll started with the blues so that's where they decided to end it. As refreshing as falling asleep on the wheel. - Greg M.

JALE - *Dreamcake* (Sub Pop) This one starts out with a bang, once the drumming settles out of the white basement thing, well enough to get way with it. The vocal melodies in this one are pretty nice while the guitar distorts underneath and then comes clean for the harmony parts. A pretty mellow release I like the use of tremolo on the song "Again" and I like their use of space in songs; by playing less sometimes, it makes things sound big without being loud. You may want to, you may not, but I would if I didn't already have it. Not a release you would expect to find on the Sub Pop label five years ago. Are they changing their face to the indie rock thing? The next big thing after "grunge?" - Dave U.

JEFF AND JANET - *Jesus Ship To Sing A Song To* (ShimmyDisc) Jeff ■ Jeff Lescher of the Chicago punk band Green; Janet is Janet Bean of the Chicago alternative band Eleventh Dream Day. On this absolutely wonderful album, Jeff plays Graham Parsons and Janet is his Emmylou Harris and as ■■■■■ their way through about a dozen transcendent Parsons covers. This blew ■■■ away far more than any "Unplugged" LP or tribute album ■■■ has before. Maybe it's because both performers ■■■ straying so far ■■■ of their usual sound. Probably it's just because these are GREAT old songs ("You Don't Miss Your Water," "Return of The Grievous Angel," "You're Still On My Mind") and the duo sings them all beautifully, with just ■■■ right acoustic accompaniment - a little guitar, a touch of pedal steel, ■ bit of violin. - Jim T.

JESUS LIZARD - *Show* (Giant) This pretty much amounts to a greatest hits live type o' thang (except that there's no "Mouthbreather," no "Then Came Dudley," and ■■■ "Blockbuster.") I understand that these guys got paid a substantial wad for this juiced-up soundboard tape. All I've got to say is ■■■ if anyone deserved to retire rich, David Yow ■■■ taken enough blows to rate. It's been ■■■ incredible road, but I think this band is near the end of it. - Des Jr.

JESUS LIZARD - *Down* (Touch ■ Go) Well, pass the catsup 'cause I'm gonna eat some words. After several releases with recycled live trax tossed in, these road rats finally deliver a ■■■ full length studio LP. Now I could (should) quibble ■■■ the fact that some of these cuts are still repeats (this is "Fly On The Wall's" third appearance and "Mistletoe" & "Elegy's" second) and I could also point out that JL have their sound locked down cold, but this album is strong enough to overlook such trivialities. I admit I've ■■■ down ■■■ these guys lately, citing ■■■ seeming lack of inspiration ■■■ fatigue. I still believe that to ■■■ certain extent, but "Horse," "Din," and "Destroy Before Reading" add at least a few more classics to the JL canon. All in all, ■■■ is ■■■ solid release from ■■■ band I should not yet discount. Plus! It has ■■■ wonderful ■■■ painting by Malcolm Bucknall and despite ■■■ rumours, it's ■■■ ■■■ Touch and Go. - Des Jr.

JOAN JETT ■ THE BLACKHEARTS - *Pure And Simple* (Warner Bros.) The first studio effort since the disappointing 1■■■ pop letdown *Notorious* has Joan Jett back ■■■ track and on fire, co-writing songs with such 90's punk rock icons ■■■ Kathleen Hanna (Bikini Kill), ■■■ Bjelland (Babes In Toyland),

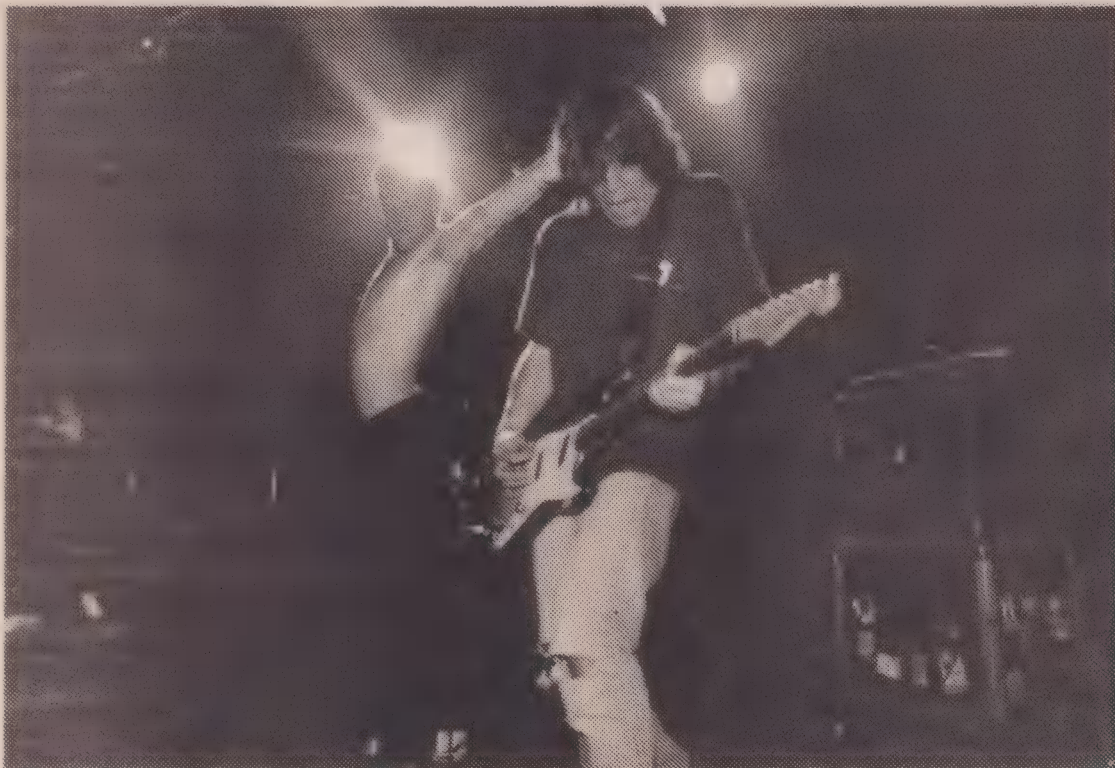
and Donita Sparks (L7.) Songs like "Go Home," "Spinster," and "Rubber ■■■ Glue" contain some of ■■■ most dynamic punk riffs ■■■ to buzz from Joan's guitar. Overall, the songs still remain ■ bit too pop, with catchy singalong choruses watered down by the bad 70's production. You have to wonder, since Joan has become a producer in her ■■■ right (Bikini Kill, Circus Lupus,) why ■■■ has to trust ■■■ bunch of old men Kenny Laguna, Desmond Child, and Ed Stasium to "fix" her sound? The songs and energy are really there this time, in fact this ■■■ her best album in ten years. And performed live, these songs ■■■ ass. Catch her in ■■■ club near you. - Frank P.

JOHN MONOPOLY, *Octagon Soap* (E.S.P. Management, 888 Seventh Ave., 29 Flr, New York, NY 10106) Funky Rock, overall, lapsing ■ various times into reggae, metal, folksy rock, and rap. The sparse arrangements ■■■ kind of cool, but the slick production and too much reverb in the vocals are not. This sounds ■■■ of what Trenchmouth from Chicago might sound like after a couple of major ■■■ releases. Parts of it are very cool and parts ■■■ just annoying. - Paul S.

JOHN'S BLACK DIRT - *Perpetual Optimism Is A Force Multiplier* (Grass Records) This disc is kind of pleasant, if ■ bit generic. It's pretty much mellow indie-pop, with ■■■■ tunes ■■■ try to rock out a bit. There's nothing that really stands out, but the nice, jangly guitars make for some nice background music while reading or something. - Paul S.

DANIEL JOHNSTON - *Fun* (Atlantic) Wow, look who's on Atlantic. While this CD varies drastically from other stuff he's done (like, it has production,) it's still very good. That high-voiced nut wails away with ■ "where did you get kicked" croon and lyrics ■■■ a 7 yr old might find simplistic. Most of this ■■■ his usual piano/guitar/vocal solo stuff, altho a few tracks have some rather out of place electrification. But overall, this is good old-fashioned funny farm folk. You may hate it, but I really dig it. Rock. - Jamie T.

JOYRIDE - *Another ■■■ Of Mondays* (Dr. Dream) These Orange County melodic punk power-popsters put out a cool sound that keeps your feet tapping. Steve Solo and Sandy Hansen have track records that ■■■ back to the Adolescents and Agent Orange; fortunately, they've grown up but not mellowed out. So you get simple, thoughtful music about change and heartbreak by some rather ugly dudes who just want to do their thing of three-part harmonies, hooks, and thoughtful layered lyrics. - Tom B.



MOIST BOYZ

Shredding noise rock from South Jersey. RIP. Photo by Dave Urbano

JUGHEAD'S REVENGE - *Elimination* (BYO) At it's best, this reminds me of NOFX crossed with Poison Idea, ■ it's worst, it reminds me of 6 million metal bands. Still, for the most part, it's pretty good power hardcore with excellent production and nice packaging. - Jon C.

KATFISH ROW - *This Is Americana* (Anvil, 131 Riverside Dr #5D, New York NY 10024) Old fashioned, down home rock n roll with some synth and harmonica. Damn, that made this album sound a helluva lot more interesting than it really is. Yawn. - Jamie T.

KNOCK-OUT DROPS (Shattered Music, 646 South Detroit, Los Angeles, CA, 90036)- Fifties be-bop and sixties reverb garage twang spacing out ■ Billy Idol school crooning. Rock n' roll is fantasy and ■ soon as you realize that, the sooner you ■ build your own time machine. Helli, I've driven my slick-back Chevy to the moon . . . ■ big deal. Knock-out Drops' five song EP -- great for changing your eyes to cat and car to flames. Spice drops in the music industry candy bowl. - Greg M.

KRAVIN' A'S - *Krave On!* (Get Hip) A healthy dose of sixties pop while loungin' at the neighbors' pool party. The lava lamps are lavaing and everybody is frugging (and that's not ■ cuss word, daddy-o!) Yeah, man, like, *un-square!* Krave on. - J. Turri

KRYPTONITE NIXON - *Swag* - (Flipside, PO Box 60790, Pasadena, CA 91116) This is mostly cool, post-punkish music with a pop sensibility. The guitars buzz away over distorted vocals a la David Yow. Some tracks did tend to drag a little, but most had my feet tapping, my knees bouncing, and my head bobbing. - Paul S.

L7 - *Hungry For Stink* (Slash) The hard-rockin', snotty, chug-chug, ageless, genderless, bouncy-riff, downright pissed off torture machine known as L7 is back to rock your world. This time they tackle topics ranging from stalking women ("Can I Run.") to women drag racers ("Shirley.") This CD is much less pop sounding on the surface than *Bricks Are Heavy*, but ■ you really listen to the songs, they stick in your head. The L7 signature hard-driving bar-chord rumble is still very much intact, but these songs show a new maturity. "Stuck Here Again," penned by Suzi Gardner and Donita Sparks, is ■ pop-welded, melodic slow-burn delivered with anguished vocals flowing from Suzi's raspy throat. Longevity, talent, and guts drive this band as always, proving again why L7 should be at the forefront of our alternative nation. - Frank P.

LAST CALL - *The Land Of Opportunity* (Esoteric, Box 452, Hershey PA 17033) Six studio tracks and two live cuts of punk rock bliss with ■ twist. Last Call is the band that refuses to die, ■ shining example of the DIY punk ethic from Pennsylvania. The fire in the music and words of Bob Brechbill through the years has never gone out, and from the sound of it, ■ could be ■ long time before Bob ■ Co. hang up the punk rock boots. On the outing, greatly enhanced by the addition of keyboardist Danielly Hlatky, the songs ■ hard metal-punk, emotionally charged political and social commentaries from ■ band life-experienced enough to know what they're yelling about. The keyboards add an almost gothic feel, with elements of vintage punk, TSOL, and East Coast metal core. I expect to hear from Last Call for many more years. - Frank P.

LEAVING TRAINS - *The Big Jinx* (SST) To my surprise, this is ■ of the few things on SST I've really liked lately. Most of the songs range from quick 2minute fast pop-punk songs to slower-paced tunes that run past five minutes. The high-pitched vocals get annoying after a while and wind up sounding a bit like Dinosaur Jr. - Bob B.

LEEWAY - *Adult Crash* (Interchord/Mechanic) Leeway have never been one of my favorite bands. In fact, I've always thought them to be pretty lame. Well, they do nothing here to prove me wrong. They have pretty much crossed over fully to the metal side, and while ■ bands do this without sounding lame, Leeway do not. The style here is harder metal with distorted vocals. This is prime Headbangers Ball stuff. Let them have it. - ■ G.

LESSER - *Self titled* (Endless Music, Box 647, Hollywood CA 90070) Unlike some of their noisier labelmates, Lesser for writes actual "songs" ■ opposed to merely mixing background noise with noise vox. Lesser has ■ penchant for starting off with random snippets and then segue into superfuzz noise-guitar howls and vox. One of the snippets was a Smiths sample, which promptly inspired me to take out this disc and replace it with *Louder Than Bombs*. Oh well. - Jamie T.

LIFE WITH THE LIONS - *These Dream Days* (Faith Strange, PO Box 1412, LIC, NY 11101) Former Black 47 and Copernicus members front this ■ "alternative" group. Oddly enough, their CD liner notes state, "This is our first recording - play loud." How original. The moody artistic sleeve exemplifies the harmonic, Karma-genre music contained within. - Tom B.

LITTLE GREEN MEN - "Augustine Nights" CD EP - (Labate Management; P.O. Box 4246; Dunellen, NJ 08812) Another funk/alternative band. These ■ ■ dime ■ dozen these days, except, surprise, these guys can play their instruments. This simply ■ that every once in ■ while, there comes ■ part that is not boring, and actually keeps my interest for ■ few moments. This is not ■ bad record, just sort of bland, but I would probably like it if I ever listened to this kind of stuff. I don't know about that management company thing, though. They're not that good - Matt B.

LOCUST SOLUS - *Waverly* (Grass Records) A distinctive dischorded band creating poly-rhythmic patterns and nervous mood changes. It's like suddenly realizing the scenery all around you is perpetually falling into itself. In a field giving home to such bands as Sonic Youth, The Grifters, and Polvo, Locust Solus manage to emerge with their own transient approach. Droning, crooked and even comical at times, Waverly was made for rainy days. - Greg M.

LONESOME VAL, NYC (Bar None Records, PO Box 1704, Hoboken, NJ 07030) This is above average country folk featuring Val Haynes and several very talented studio musicians. It's beautifully produced by Suzy Roche, who also sits in on acoustic guitar. The melodies are pleasant, the sound is very clean, the mixing job is spectacular, and the lyrics ■ intelligent. The only drawback is the abundance of country twang in Val's vocals. I would have liked this to be more folk and less country, but I liked it anyway. - Paul S.

MACHINE HEAD - *Burn My Eyes* (Roadrunner) MH ■ one of those new ■ of "groovemet" bands that have been ■ the rise in years late. They take dexterous funk textured crunch and intermingle both lockstep mosh chording and head flailing blur with gruff vocaling. To me what sets MH above most Red Hot Pantera Pepper glommages is 1) the obvious thought and practice which tighten up their attacks and 2) guitarists who accurately punctuate these tracks without becoming the "Mr. Squiggle-lead" style that dominates most metal. This is a band w/musical depth and I'd expect that they could be contenders very soon. Recommended. - Des Jr.

MADBALL - *Set It Off* (Roadrunner) - Grrr. They're tough, 'cause they live in New York. They play NYHC, metal style. The lead singer's older brother is Roger of Agnostic Front so you know he's tough. This CD is reminiscent of Biohazard, with better song writing. It's faster, too. The best "metal" release that I've heard in quite ■ while. It's quite well played, and they ■ tight ■ can be. Somewhere between Slayer and Sick Of It All, but without the hellia annoying solos. Warning: Will make people mosh hard. - Matt B.

MAJESTY CRUSH - *Sans Muscles* (Vulva Recordings, 2405 Holmes, Detroit MI 48212) This ■ song EP starts off with some whispered vocals, shoegazer type stuff, then some still relaxed but more electrified songs, and later still, there ■ parts that ■ really upbeat, like Jesus & Mary Chain minus some of the distortion. All the rest of the cuts take a bit from these categories. This isn't easily labeled, which I like. - Jamie T.

MARXMAN - 33 Revolutions Per Minute (A&M) A refreshing hip-hop excursion with a cockney accent and attitude. Preaching tolerable dogma and the universal Golden Rule, which the illiterate can still consume due to the earthy flutes, bagpipes and ever-soothing harmonic Sinead O'Connor on backing vocals. Low whistles, tin whistles and banjo expertise interplay with old-fashioned soul and upbeat house-worthy DJ fingerplay. Will appease disciples of Meat Beat Manifesto, Tribe Called Quest and peace in general. X marks the man, right on target. - Greg M.

MAYO THOMPSON - *Corky's Debt To His Father* (Drag City, PO Box 476867, Chicago IL 60647) Novel in a boring, coffee house sorta way with its pseudo-intellectual, kool, minimalist sound and back-to-basics shit approach with eclectic vocals and all. Oh-so-odd accompaniments forced me to turn this off before it had finished. No thanks. - Jamie T.

MEKONS - *Retreat From Mephis* (1/4 Stick, PO Box 25342, Chicago IL 60625) The first track is on the Celtic side, kinda like the Pogues gone rock. The 2nd track has some sincere poppy singing on top of sloppy Velvets guitar, mixed with intermittently crunchy guitars and mid-range distorted bass. Ok, ok, I like it, he said after the third track, which is what independent rock should sound like - recorded just right. - Dave U.

MERCURY RULE - *God Protects Fools* (Caulfield Records, 5701 Randolph St, Lincoln, NE, 68510) Mercury Rule play wind out anguished songs that ■ appropriate for tension release and mile exorcism. Merc's tight driving rhythm section permits their forward guitar sound which is ■ original as it gets in these un-original times. 'Hit Me' screams "HEY!" in such a finger-pointing way that I'm dying to meet vocalist Heidi Ore. She sounds ■ though she could beat my ass and would enjoy doing so in front of ■ few hundred people while the band plays on. Chasing me in fervor around Marshall stacks in true dominatrix fashion all the while telling me how

seem appropriate for tension release and mile exorcism. Merc's tight driving rhythm section permits their forward guitar sound which is as original as it gets in these un-original times. 'Hit Me' "HEY!" in such a finger-pointing way that I'm dying to meet vocalist Heidi Ore. She sounds as though she could beat my ass and would enjoy doing so in front of a few hundred people while the band plays on. Chasing me in fervor around Marshall stacks in true dominatrix fashion all the while telling me how worthless I am and I like that too and I sweat and she chases me violently and I'm scared and it is exciting and . . . oops. How embarrassing. - Greg M.

MEDICINE BALL - *Science Secret Stars* (Stanton Park) Ugh. Bad progressive country rock that's just boring and droning, and has absolutely nothing to do with good rock and roll. Maybe your slow-witted friends into country might like this. - Matt B.

MEREL - *Merel* (Gern Blandsten, 305 Haywood Dr, Paramus NJ 07652) An emotionally charged debut (and farewell) from this talented but now defunct Bayonne-based band. The stripped-down guitars and vocals provide an electric charge that carries over from track to track, with Fugazi-like fractured rhythms much like Policy of 3. The album jacket is a beautiful indigo/blue with gold artwork, the inner sleeve contains lyrics interspersed with angry bits of prose which explain the genesis of the songs. A beautiful job all the way through. - Jim T.

MILKMINE - *Braille* (Choke Inc, 1376 Grand, Chicago IL 60622) Coming off more dissonant and distorted than before, Milkmine do it again the only way they can - raw. On the 2nd track, the singer sounds like he's screaming w/ a big fat retainer in his mouth. This two-bass drums ensemble gives New Brunswick's own Lawn Jockeys (3 basses drums) run for their cojones. Obviously guitar is necessary to fulfill the carnage and massive gear jamming that goes on here. - Dave U.

PUZZ - *The Great Unwashed* (Lunch Money/Moot Records, P.O. Box 1619, Evanston IL 60204) Mo Fuzz play basic, sort of mid-80s-indie-style rock that probably sounds great in a crowded basement. Unfortunately, the adrenaline wears off quick listening to the CD. The album suffers from the double whammy of a weak-sounding recording that robs the music of any depth AND samey songs with seemingly interchangeable parts. The best moments come when a violin and viola suddenly join the band "Tell You Why" and "Anthem." Not that the added instruments do all that much -- especially in the drippy "Anthem" -- but they offer a break from the otherwise constant soundscape. Oh yeah, if you let the cd spin for several minutes after the last song closes out, you get a short answering machine blip. -- Mike Gangloff

MOIST - *Silver* (Eml) Although this Canadian outfit most certainly possesses sincerity and talent, the alternative rock music contained in this release seems a bit bland. It sounds like college radio music that might have been popular a few years ago. - Jamie T.

MOL TRIFFID / PLAINFIELD - Split LP (Boom Boom, Box 16191, San Francisco CA 94116) Okay, before we get to the music, we need to talk about the cover. It looks like a fake Sesame Street record, with Ernie on one side and Bert on the other. It's pretty twisted. All right. I've heard lots about Plainfield but have never met them. Well, they're pretty weird. The music is slow and spooky, while the singer half sings, half talks through the mix. Mindbending. Mol Triffid is crazy and noisy, like a less metal Alice Cooper. Interesting but nothing I'd listen to much. - Mat G.

THE MORTALS - *Bullet Proof* (ESTRUS P.O. BOX 2125 BELLINGHAM, WA 98227) Yet another fine chunk of outlaw garage rock from Estrus. "Bullet Proof" is the soundtrack for THE MORTALS' image of fast driving, tie flapping, black and white chasing privateeye spy charged one night loving. Puzzling how every song gives you that "Secret Agent Man" feel. Thank you Estrus... I may now give my Fuzztones albums a break. - Greg M.

MOTHER'S DAY - *If I Only Had A Brain* (Project A Bomb, Box 4233, St Paul

55104) This is really weird - 35 tracks, some shorter than others, that fade in and out from punk to rock to alternative to industrial. It's almost as if They Might Be Giants had a really bad trip or something. Weirdly interesting, but not something I myself am playing for pleasure. - Matt G.

MOUNT SHASTA - *Put The Creep On* (Skin Graft, PO Box 257546, Chicago IL 60625) British feed-back punk with a tendency for indiscretions. Rucksack riffs and high tone guitars converge to create classic 2-D punk rock. Buy it if you have a good job and make lots of money. Otherwise, buy some food. - Greg M.

MULE - *If I Don't Six* (1/4 Stick/Touch Me Go) If you're not going to break new ground, at least tread some okay stuff. That's what Mule have done. They make up for the lack of originality with solid post-punk energy. Mid-paced with a keen sense of songwriting. Bravo. - Jamie T.

MURPHY'S LAW - *Murphy's Law/Back With A Bong* (Profile/Another Planet) This CD is a repress of Murphy's Law's first and second lps. The group is one of the most exciting bands around, one of the few NY/HC bands who could mix different styles of music and make it work. For example, "Ska Song" blends hardcore and ska, "Bong!" mixes rasta with hardcore, and their songs have horns to give them a really full sound. Their lyrics remain on the unserious side which is good because there is a lack of fun bands of late and Murphy's Law excel in fun. Most of their songs are about smoking pot, beer, parties, skinheads, and having sex. If you want to check out a great fun old hardcore band you should check this out because it has 25 songs that are all great. One of the few CDs that you can listen straight through. - Bob B.



MURPHY'S LAW Photo by Deanna Bailey

NEW TURKS - *Drunk On Cock* (Engine) More noisy garage-punk from these guys. The fast songs are fun, and the leadoff track, "American Soul Spiders," does a good job punking up Van Halen's "Hot For Teacher" riff. But the song that alone makes this thing worth buying is the cover of the Queens' "This Place Sucks," which is almost as good as the original. - Jon C.

NEW MONGRELS - *Not Dead* (Yet) (Daemon, PO Box 1207, Decatur GA 30031) Folklore ritual rotgut laying on a log in the sun. I found my baby dug in the dirt on my run. I'm still out tonight and I'm spendin' all my time. Better than The Allman Brothers on a bad day. Worse than Jethro Tull on a good day. But who's counting? Why do labels send such an album to an UNDERGROUND fanzine when they'd have better luck Thursday Night Bingo? - Greg M.

NO FX - *Punk In Drublic* (Epitaph, 6201 Sunset, #111, Hollywood, CA 90028). I remember Fat Mike telling me back in 1988 or so, back when NOFX had just released the *Liberal Animation* LP on their own Collasal Wassail Records, that his goal for the band was to become as big as SNFU. Now, after selling 75,000 copies of *White Trash*, *Two Heels*, and *A Bean*, and touring the country in their infamous mega-bus while playing to packed houses all over with people like Fishbone, I'd say they've long passed SNFU and are ready to dethrone INXS as the biggest of 4-initial rock bands. So, after having consistently gained momentum the last few years with great album after great album, and after having established themselves as one of the best and most popular punk bands in the world, I was expecting big things from NOFX's new one. Unfortunately, *Punk In Drublic* didn't quite deliver the goods I had hoped for. It's got all of the tight musicianship, funny lyrics, and super clean production of past NOFX albums, but it just doesn't pack the punch that its predecessors have. The funny songs are still funny, and the hooks are still there, but there's just nothing that can measure up to "Please Play This Song on the Radio" or "Bringing Me Down" (both from *White Trash*) in terms of utter hilarity or catchy-as-hell punk rock. *Punk In Drublic* is good, but I've come to expect something better than good from Fat Mike and pals, making this a slightly disappointing release. - Jon C.

NOVA MOB - *Nova Mob* (Restless) This is Grant Hart from Husker Du's band. I know because he says so right on the CD case, but it wouldn't make a difference because this one falls into the bland alternative guitar rock section. The songwriting is mature and melodic but the delivery could be way less polished to give it some sort of substance. - Dave U.

NUNS - *4 Days In A Hotel Room: Their Greatest Hits* (Posh Boy, Box 4474, Palm Desert CA 92261) This collection includes new stuff as well as their

classic debut album from 1980. This CA band can [redacted] that Sid Vicious OD'd at one of their parties. Great old school, raucous, Ramones-type punk, from the days when men were [redacted] and punks were punks, and [redacted] could rock as hard as the boys. - Jamie T.

OLIVION SEEKERS - *Spirit Of America* (T/K Records, Box 42423, Portland OR 97242) Neil Youngish vocals with good old-fashioned rockn roll, and a bluegrass feel dating back from [redacted] time when people would have considered Pearl Jam [redacted] seafood spread. Folksy overtones highlighted by Mark Sten and Heidi Hellbender's exquisitely catchy harmonizing. This release draws you deeper into its spell the longer it plays - interesting, subtle folk music. - Jamie T.

ORANGUTANG - *Dead Sailor Acid Blues* (Imago) The first 3 songs were boring and slow, but the fourth song picked up a little and impressed my friends and I with the line "the day before I died..." but mostly they sound like old Stone Temple Pilots or something. - Drunk Jason

PALACE BROTHERS - *Days In The [redacted]* (Drag City) This is good music to have sex to, [redacted] it's kind of easy listening [redacted] doesn't piss off partners [redacted] to more aggressive music. [Editor's note: This writer is married and is not advocating punk music [redacted] a premarital sex aid.] As their bio states, the Palace Brothers' music is an unplugged "celebration of melody." I especially liked the vocals, crooning lyrics like "When you have no one, no [redacted] hurt you" and "I walked away from everything." - Tom B.

PANSY DIVISION - *Deflowered* (Outlook) [redacted] horny gay punk rock by Berkeley's homocore kings (uh, queens...) A lot of these songs rehash the familiar Pansy Division formula - three-chord Ramonesish punk tunes with funny lyrics about getting horny and having [redacted]. But on this album, lead singer and songwriter Jon Ginoli expands his repertoire [redacted] bit; there's [redacted] song about a rebel boy named Denny with AIDS that's touching and wonderfully introspective, [redacted] Jonathan Richman cover (with the gender changed) that's simple and sweet, [redacted] song about kissing that's romantic no matter what your sexual orientation, and a totally rocking [redacted] up of Pete Shelley's "Homo Sapien." - Jim T.

PARASITES - *Pair* (Shredder, 74 Plum Tree #3, San Rafael CA 94901) If you're [redacted] fan of poppy punk, look no further. The [redacted] (in [redacted] way) Parasites CD is here to quench your thirst. This disc includes songs from their long out of print "Pair Of Sides" EP plus some stuff from their EP's, all remixed and sounding better than the originals. For [redacted] long time I used to compare this band to the Ramones, but after listening [redacted] this, I'd have to say they [redacted] better than the Ramones. All their songs have catchy hooks and singalong choruses, and Nikki's vocals are smooth and blend in great with the music. Nikkie is probably one of the few punks who can actually sing. By all means, get this and you won't be disappointed. - Bob B.

PARTNER - *Silent Night, Holy Night* (CM Records, [redacted] Queen Anne Ave North, Suite 151, Seattle WA 98109) Way produced classic Rock-n-roll album. Blues number? Yes. Long \$2000 guitar sounding heavy metal solos? Yes. Sound like the background music from [redacted] CinnaBurst commercial? Yes. But hey, if you like Janes Addiction, Pearl Jam, The Spin Doctors, and Aerosmith buy this album and call yourself "Alternative" all day long. If my sales pitch doesn't persuade you then maybe the marijuana leaf [redacted] the cover will. Sheesh. - Greg M.

PHALLACY *Peach* (Amok Records; Droste-Hulshoff Str. 42; 59192 Bergkamen, Germany) Looking for that [redacted] anarchist version of [redacted] sXe hardcore you [redacted] love? Here you go. This is rad as could be. The bass is poppy, recording sloppy, and punk [redacted] all get out. I am so glad I got this. I would have [redacted] know about [redacted] otherwise. Now you will. I'm screaming along and bouncing my head as I write. It's amazing. Take [redacted] Undertow [redacted] a marking point. A must, [redacted] must. - Matt B.

PITCHBLENDE - *Au Jus* (Fist Puppet/Cargo). A [redacted] dissonant Jawbox (who Pitchblende appear to be good pals with) with lots of herky-jerky tempos, shifting song structures, noisy guitars and subtle melody. I also detect [redacted] little Drive Like Jehu and Don Caballero in here, and like Jawbox/Jehu/Don Cab, Pitchblende can't be fully appreciated upon one, or [redacted] couple, listens. There's so much going on here that each listen identifies a [redacted] buried melody or musical hook and each play through finds [redacted] new favorite track. But count on "Karoshi" and "Tourniquet" to consistently satisfy. - Jon C.

PIZZCATO FIVE - *Five By Five* (Matador) Three wierd Japanese disco/fashion divas finally invade the US. Their stuff has been hard to find (and expensive) but [redacted] they're making their debut as Matador's first dance group (Unsane is next). P5 pre-dated Deeee-Lite by about 8 years, and their groove lies not only in the heart, but in the humor. Hawaii 5-0 in Japanese, tiki lounge music and James Bond, all in one convenient

package. A must. - Jodi S.

POOBAH - *Alkaloid* (Posing Toad, 18 W State St, Athens OH 45701) Add [redacted] part pure post-punk roar, another of droning guitars, and yet another of pure energy, and you have what I consider a very powerful and interesting band. Vague screams and dissonant chords propel this band into the new generation of acceptable, MTV-ready noisecore ala' Afghan Whigs. Way cool. - Jamie T.

POP DEFECT - *Don't Be Hateful* (Flipside, P.O. Box 60790, Pasadena CA 91116)

Los Angeles-based trio Pop Defect turn in six churning, punk and surf-tinged songs here. Shoutalong melodies and "Pablo Picasso"-style rhythms dominate the mix, but there's more going on. Guitarist Alan scrapes some healthy feedback from his instrument from time to time and on "A Fly in a Cyclone," two guest guitarists join in, creating [redacted] sudden Niagara of sustaining hums. Other odd bits of dissonance creep into the song structures, only to melt back into smooth, upbeat grooves. Another strange arrangement comes when the chorus of "The Moth," arguably already "Hateful's" highpoint - reappears as a hallucinatory loop in an unlisted final track, in the midst of [redacted] wacky demonstration of [redacted] sort of guitar/synth apparatus. -- Mike Gangloff

PUNCHBUGGY - *All [redacted] Christian Rollerskate* (Enguard, 2230A Coursol St, Montreal Canada H3J 1C5) Throbbing catchy pop-punk from Canada, with a little Doughboys, a little Smalley/Dag Nasty, lots of nifty harmony vocals, and catchy riffs ala' Screeching Weasel. Good driving music. - Jim T.

QUEERS - *Beat Off* (Lookout) Gabba gabba hey, it's a [redacted] Queens LP, produced by Ben Weasel no less. There aren't any surprises here, but then, there weren't any surprises [redacted] *Rocket To Russia* either - just lotsa snotty three-chord punk rock played real fast with funny lyrics (the funniest of which is the song about Ben Weasel.) Inspirational verse: "He don't like Nirvana/ I know he don't like Prong/ And I'll bet you five bucks/ that he don't like this song." - Jim T.

QUEERS - *Grow Up* (Lookout) A reissue of the Queer's first LP reveals that the band hasn't changed much over the years - this is the [redacted] loud, fast, and snotty Ramones-damaged punk rock they're still playing today. The only difference is the obvious Angry Samoans influence here, since these songs [redacted] written pre-Political Correctness ("Hey, we're the Queers but [redacted] ain't no fags," goes one song, and then there's "Boobarella"...). - Jim T.

RANCID - *Let's Go* (Epitaph) My favorite punk rock record of the year [redacted] far? The nod has to go to Rancid. These 23 ditties just kick [redacted] from the go, whether it's Tim (aka Lint) croaking out his vocals with that six-packs-a-day bark of his or Lars and Matt's slightly smoother lead vox. Sloppy punk and ska beats still get hopelessly intertwined and the band sounds like they're playing at least half of these songs faster than they were supposed to, but that just makes [redacted] all the more fun. - Jim T.

REVEREND HORTON HEAT - *Liquor In The Front...* (Interscope) The Reverend is back in town, ladies. So trade in your umbrellas for poker chips and don't forget to [redacted] those sexy thigh-high stockings that the Reverend doth love so. Texas, liquor, cars... the savage beauty of the Reverend remains unmatched in this great land of ours. Al Jourgenson repents by producing this 13 song carnal carnival and [redacted] adds his own lascivious licks on the pedal steel guitar and backing vocals. Strap [redacted] your boots and confess all of your sins to the Reverend, and remember to give him your money. - Greg M.

RIDE - *Carnival Of Light* (Sire) Musically, Ride have evolved into a not-as-bizarre-as-it-seems mix of Stevie Nicks and Jethro Tull enlisting Hammond organ, sitar, tamboura, and several species of percussion instruments into an absolute journey of elation. Ride [redacted] not [redacted] obvious as the Beatles in their method of melodic conversion but the English air of musical elder persists through these twelve head-worthy pieces. Get up in the tree and dig Ride. - Greg M.

RODAN - *Rusty* (1/4 Stick/Touch [redacted] Go) The singer/guitarist of this band is really fucking annoying. So much [redacted] that I [redacted] going to offer [redacted] reward to the first person to bring me his limp, lifeless body. But I digress. Musically, this reminds me of Slint (oh, imagine my surprise! Another Louisville band that sounds [redacted] Slint!) but this is [redacted] punk-rock. Actually, I can recommend it, but I still hate that Jason kid. - Zack K..

ROOM ELEVEN - *Room Eleven* (Poet's Hotel, PO Box 1353, New Brunswick NJ 08901) Jangly college-rock with some neat hooks and melodies but generally [redacted] bit too generic for this discerning listener. Not the worst, but by no means the best of this type I've heard lately. Is that vague

enough? - Jamie T.

RUST - Rust (Atlantic) At times Rust sounds like a cross between Quicksand and Helmet, but they don't do much to make themselves any different or interesting. So you're left with dull songs that go on way too long. The singer's times sounds exactly like Quicksand's Walter. - Bob B.

SAINT ETIENNE - Tiger Bay (Warner Bros.) Ah, those college faves with the hipname back with a release sure to make all 120 Minutes disciples open up and say ahh. *Tiger Bay* opens with a number laced with dancey James Bond sensibility, minus vocals. That's okay, at least it's got a beat. The rest goes along with more dancey and dreamy numbers, cool female vocals, and an occasional stab at Pet Shop Boys boogie. This has a pleasant and calming quality throughout. Not upfront uniqueness, but background elegance. - Jamie T.

■ - Clumsy (Atlantic) This is one band whose leap from the punk-rock underground to major label status makes perfect sense; even when they were recording for the barely-solvent New Red Archives label, Samiam always sounded as if they were crafting their meticulous pop-punk anthems for a mass audience. Which is a nicer way of saying that all their songs

sound like a handful of well-chosen punk-rock clichés welded together with Jason Beebout's overripe emo vocals. - Jim T.

SEXPOD - Home EP (Go Kart, Box 20, New York NY 10012) Hard rockin' and sexy is how to describe Hoboken's Sexpod, whether they're belting out those Led Zeppelinish bluesy metal numbers with the throbbin' funk bass getting all soft and slinky like vintage Patti Smith. Bravo. - Jim T.

SF SEALS - Nowhere (Matador) Barbara Manning has her detractors, but this album should change their minds. About half covers, *Nowhere* is a perfect example of what a Woman In Rock (for those who need to categorize such things) should be: ballsy but not too macho, sweet when she has to be. "Back Again" is sheer genius, one of the best songs of 94 and even has a George Carlin sample to boot. Better than her best work in *World Of Pooh*. I hope she finally gets her due, and this is just the album to do it. - Jodi S.

SHADES APART - Self titled (Ultraviolet, Box 5082, No Branch NJ 08876) Wow, a super convenience re-release of the first Shades Apart lp (originally on Wishing Well) and their EP on Sunspot, for a total of 18 tracks. Very emotional hardcore here, maybe like Samiam or Dag Nasty, with melodic guitar and catchy bass lines that pull you right in. The vocals really stick in your head. Check out this NJ trio. - J.Turri

SHIRK CIRCUS - Words To Say (Bar None) As much as I would like to lavish praise on this young trio's latest recording (and first for Bar None,) I'm afraid the group has yet to outgrow their almost embarrassing debt to Elvis Costello, whose influence (musically, lyrically, and vocally) is all over this CD. None of that is helped by Josh Silverman's deadpan, uninflected vocals, which - to borrow a line from Dorothy Parker - run the gamut of emotions from A to B. Rule of thumb: If the singer sounds bored, the listener is sure to follow. - Jim T.

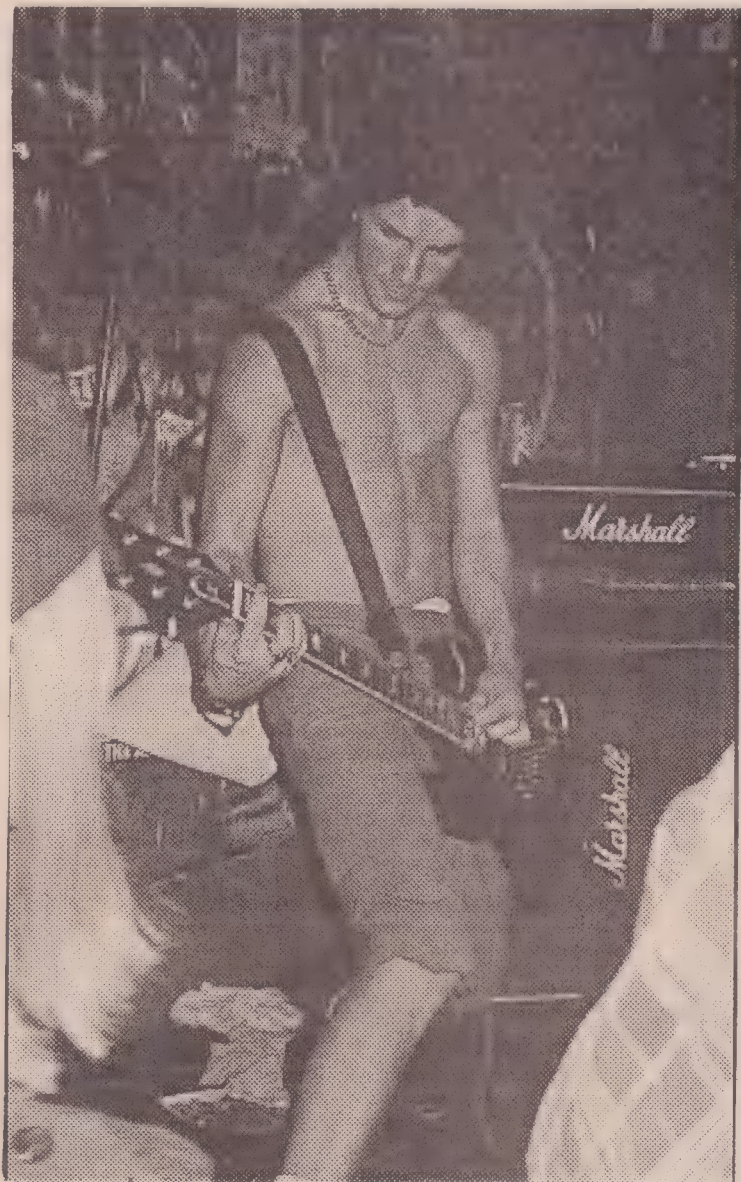
SHOOTYZ GROOVE - Respect (Mercury) "Buddah Blessed," the first song, is definitely an entertaining listen. Dual rappers celebrating the joys of marijuana, chanting over nostalgic hardcore riffs with "go...go...go" vibe choruses - it's hard not to like shit like that. But five songs about herb and Crazy Horse get old real quick. Plus, the hardcore riffs get watered down by generic funk-metal parts, and abundant hip hop clichés in full effect well. The band can rock, their rapping is energetic, and this live recording is a good indication that their shows are jumping, but this funky hardcore on the hip hop tip stuff has been played out. - Sam B.

SHORTY - Fresh Breath (Skin Graft, Box 257546, Chicago IL 60625) Shorty back with more of their wild heavy raw power punk. Five brand new songs which all seem to blend together. That's the main problem. The raw vocals help pull this from the generic side to something somewhat interesting. Nothing great but worth a listen. - Bob B.

SHORTY - CD-5 (Skin Graft, P.O. Box 257546, Chicago, IL 60625). The minute I put this on, I knew these guys had to be from Chicago and Albini had to have had a hand in it. Heavy, experi-metal punk rock in a Slint/Don Caballero fashion, but unfortunately for Shorty, they seem to have ignored the "no vocalist is better than a bad vocalist" credo of the aforementioned. Really awful, screaming, grating vocals with none of the honesty or occasional melody that allows Rick Froberg (Drive Like Jehu) to pull a similar thing off. The unbearable vocals along with little differentiation between songs in terms of tempo, musical structure, or melody made this long CD-5 to sit through. - Jon C.

BOBBY SICHRAN - Self titled (Sony) This sounds exactly like Beck. Hip hop beats with folksy git on top, mumbling raps with scattered straining melodies, all hissing with low-fi recording quality and raw samples... what can I say, I think this stuff is pretty cool. This really doesn't have a hook to match the infectious "Loser" but here's another I Wannabe The Dylan Slacker Of The 90's for ya just the same. - Sam B.

SLEEPER - Preparing Today For Tomorrow's Breakdown (Excursion, PO Box 20224, Seattle WA 98102) This is the Staten Island Sleeper featuring sometime-Jersey Beat contributor John Lisa, not the British one. These guys are old school punk rockers who just keep getting better and better. This CD produced by All's Bill Stevenson and Stephen Egerton in a home studio, but the production beautifully captures the band's energetic take on that Descendents/Dag Nasty style of emotive pop punk. Great



RANCID

songs, great sound, and some interestingly offbeat lyrics for a pop-punk band too. Check it out. - Jim T.

SLOAN - *Twice Removed* (Geffen) You should be seeing ■ Sloan video after Toad the Wet Sprocket and before the Gin Blossoms on that new program called 'Alternative Music Sucks.' - Greg M.

SMALL BALL PAUL - *You In Flames* (Thirsty Ear Recordings, 274 Madison Ave, Suite 804, New York, NY, 10016) Lyrically dark modern metal with a touch of North Western style. Good band with traditional structure creating boundaries in average heavy rock. - Greg M.

SMART BROWN HANDBAG - (Stone Garden, 3101 Exposition Place, Los Angeles CA 90018) Immobile electric folk. Do you know how the Counting Crows never change gears? ■ neither. - Greg M.

SMEGMA - *Ism* (Tim Kerr) Available on both vinyl and disc with different tracks (and sequencing,) this is total mindfuck no matter what format you like. Sample-happy jazzfractures make this a frighteningly narcotic spewfest. Or I could say that they're closer to the Sun City Girls' end of the universe than they ■ to yours. Either way, I'm keeping it. - Des Jr.

SNAPCASE - *Lookinglasself* (Victory) Snapcase ■■■ ■■■ of the bigger new breed of hardcore bands around these days, but Snapcase have a distinct sound that really doesn't qualify as hardcore. All the songs have quick changes in tempo and sound; one second they're slow & melodic, and the next it's a big heavy bass leading into ■ faster part. Intelligent lyrics ■ a plus, not the typical straight edge stuff. This is worth checking out, but don't expect the usual Old School stuff you usually get on Victory. - Bob B.

SNEETCHES - *Blow Out The Sun* (SpinArt) I've always liked the Sneetches' real honest retro sound, like lost records from the early 60's. This ■ one makes me mad because it's all slick and brittle sounding, not fuzzy and mellow like ■ should be. The songs ■ still just ■ sweet (not sentimental) as ever, nicely played pop songs. I still like the Sneetches, but I hate what they've done to their sound. - Jodi S.

SNFU - *Something Green And Leafy This Way Comes* (Epitaph) There's some good news and some bad news. The good ■■■ is that SNFU are back together with a ■■■ album out. Hooray! The bad news is that their sound is slightly different. Their sound has slowed down and lost ■■■ of the energy that made them ■ great band. Chi Pig's vocals ■ ■ ear shattering as ever and their songs still have that quirky humor, but something isn't right. This is still worth getting but don't expect anything like their last LP. - Bob B.

SONIC YOUTH - *Experimental Jet Set, Trash ■ No Star* (DGC) How do you review ■ ■ Sonic Youth album? Seriously, you either like them or you don't. EJST&NS has ■ warmer sound than their last few albums. This can ■ attributed to the glorious god Analog and all his faithful friends... Big Pedals (with Bigger Knobs), Tubes and perhaps even Rotating Speaker Cabinets. These primitive gashlies, that give erections and instant motivation to the musical mind, allow the four sonic individuals to transpire ■■■ creations to prepare the human race for arrival in its present position. Okay, ■ I like them. I guess that's how you would write ■ review for the new Sonic Youth album. Featuring the song that MTV ■ tricked into thinking ■■■ "cool," 'Bull in the Heather,' and the Endless, Nameless-inspired 'Starfield Road.' Fourteen timeless tunes not as poppy as Dirty, not as grating ■ Goo. But new. The Sonic's still have it whether you do or not. - Greg M.

SONS OF HERCULES - (Unclean Records, Box 49737, Austin TX 78765) Texas boys rock the house with good rock 'n roll ala' the Didjits (mainly because of the energy) but with less punk. These short numbers all clock in at around 2 minutes, short & sweet. Damn good. Grab a margarita, put on yer dancing boots, and head to San Antonio. Sons Of Hercules rock. - Jamie T.

SOULHAT - *Good To ■ Gone* (Sony) The fine boys from Austin are back with their third lp, and their 2nd major label release. This time, we find the 'hat in ■ very funky groove, more so than on their previous albums. I wouldn't call this ■ continuation of *Outdebox*, their last effort; their tunes haven't progressed in an obvious way. But that's really ■ plus. The critical darlings of the Austin music press ■ growing up and this album marks a more mature and powerful effort, albeit with that everpresent Soulhat jamming that'll keep their old fans smiling. - Jamie T.

SPORE - *Giant* (Taang) Offtime thump mixed with sexy vox. - Des Jr.

STANDARD AMERICAN DIET - *Self-titled CD* (Endless Music, PO Box 647, Hollywood CA 90070) Spoken word passages drone on backed by techno

Ministry-type beats, as this S.F. quartet takes off in the societal anger vein. Altho there is ■ singing so-to-speak, the words and music are interesting in their own right. Good stuff. - Jamie T.

STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT - self-titled CD (World Domination) Back when ■■ and my buddies would tour the country impersonating ■ punk band, we would sometimes be asked by opening bands what we had thought of their set. Often the answer was something like "good mix," or "you guys ■■ pretty loud," which in actuality meant "you guys really sucked shit." ■ was our way of avoiding being completely honest; it was ■ damning with faint praise. Anyway, I offer this information so that you'll fully understand my review of Stanford Prison Experiment's debut CD, which is: good mix. - Jon C.

STARKWEATHER - *Crossbearer* (Too Damn Hype/Dutch East) I've always maintained that Starkweather are one of the most underrated bands to emerge in the last few years. This record actually ■■ out on vinyl some years back but only now is out on CD. Everything's been remixed, and while I liked the original mix ■ tad more, this is still ■ powerful hardcore record that combines Slayer, Sheer Terror, and Metallica. A Hard metal/hardcore crossover that really hits. - Bob B.

STRUNG OUT - *Another Day In Paradise* (Fat Wreck Chords) I like pretty much everything on Fat Wreck Chords, and this is no exception. Catchy melodic hardcore, this time with more of a metal influence (but not in a bad way, if that makes sense). You can tell that these guys are heavily influenced by NOFX (plus, it's Fat Mike's label...). Good stuff. - Matt B.

SUGARBOOM - *Planer* (Tim Kerr) If you're into Kitchens Of Distinction, than this is for you - washy English guitar music. But then "Ash Street 100" sounds like M.Stipe mumbling along with his moody band but another track sounds sort of like the Replacements. I guess this camper is really confused, but hey, nobody said variety was bad. However, I could have done without the whining vocals on "Toast." - Dave U.

SUNBRAIN - *Good Side* (Grass) This is ■ band that loves its tempo changes and solo strumming Superchunk-style, with dissonant guitars and all. In the right places, this is ■ good, solid punk package with plenty of melodies and guitars screaming in places, and softer, more melodic passages in others. The hooky quality comes in part from that Peter Brady/"Time To Change" warble, with ■■ anguished, ■■■■ quality that I found groovy. - Jamie T.

SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE - *Diary* (Sub Pop) Eleven heart-touching epics that are guaranteed to brand the conscience of fans of Jawbreaker, Smashing Pumpkins and Drive Like Jehu. Punk-soul delivered through intimate guitar operations leaving me to coin the phrase "Change your life, punk." This is agonizing, beautiful and seemingly impossible. I would have no complaints if my disc player decided to keep it. - Greg M.

Gentle, almost little-boy vocals, with teeth. Not exactly pop or punk, just stuff that makes you feel real good. "Seven" and "The Blankets Were The Stairs" get an awful lot of play in my house. This will go well with your Heatmiser record. - Jodi S.

TADPOLES - *He Fell Into The Sky* (Bakery, Box 1996, Hoboken NJ 07030) Fuzzy feedback music minus the J&MChain's drum machine, with Spacemen 3-type dreamy drug haze sounds. A good rock record to make you sit and enjoy the power. Todd Parker's moody echoey vox send this release into orbit. The Tadpoles ■■ about to become big fish, so watch for them! - Jamie T.

TELESCOPES - *The Telescopes* (Creation/Sony) Mellow, acoustic, dreamy rock with retro influences, like many other British shoegazer bands. Even with hints of the great Spacemen 3, this band is simple and soporific (which means *sleep-inducing*, today's vocabulary word for our readers.) - Jamie T.

TEN-O-SEVEN - *You're So Cool* (Excursion, P.O. Box 20224, Seattle, WA 98102) I love getting something from a band I've never heard of and having it turn out to be really good. Probably because it rarely ever happens. Ten-O-Seven ■■ from Seattle, but don't really sound like it (except for maybe The Fastbacks), which is ■ good thing in my book. They reminded me a lot of The Last or the Junk Monkeys (especially "Didn't Know"). They've got that raw rock n' roll sound with a little jangly and acoustic guitar thrown in, but there's still plenty of punk rock energy and power. "Darkest Days" is my favorite, with "Drainwinder" ■ close second. - Jon C.

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS - *John Henry* (Elektra) Although the smug, self-satisfied demeanor of the two Johns (Flansburgh & Linnell) irritates ■■ (as I'm sure it's supposed to,) and although I wouldn't admit ■ in mixed company, I can't help but hum merrily along to such TMBG classics ■■ "Anna Ng." Here's we're given ■ new idea: Add ■■■■ people! This is TMBG's first release ■■ full band with 20 ■■ songs and almost as many people! It lacks most of their usual catchiness, but makes it for it with ■■■■ nice slower

numbers and a Latin tune. Old fans will probably find enough here to make them happy. I'm embarrassed to admit it, but I probably would have bought this anyway if I didn't get a copy to review. Take away my hardcore badge now. - Jamie T.

TINDERSTICKS (Bar/None) - 77 minutes of deadpan, morose-sounding vocals (think Wolfgang Press) and odd instrumentations (for a rock record, anyway). Kinda like a more orchestrated Boo Radleys, without the obvious commercial-pop sound. This kind of stuff usually gets dismissed as pretentious, but since this entire record is extremely well-played and written, it should avoid that pigeonhole completely. - Jodi S.

TOADIES - *Rubberneck* (Interscope) I wanted to like this. I mean, after all, I think I have dissed just about every major label release sent to me. Not because of the aforementioned fact, but just because they are not to my taste. Unfortunately, this is just as bad as, if not worse than, most of the other releases by this label. Pure 70's bad metal core. These guys sound like a 90's update of songs Led Zeppelin would be ashamed of. The music is instrumental at times, but that hardly us from the singer. Unexciting, and hardly rock and roll. - Matt B.

TOTAL CHAOS - *Pledge Of Defiance* (Epitaph) I was hoping this would be good, since the latest stuff from Epitaph hadn't thrilled me. But I actually shocked that Total Chaos got signed. Their sound is very generic, like typical UK 80's hardcore (Discharge, Exploited, etc). Raw chainsaw-like vocals with 500 mph vocals. The photo of the band on the sleeve kind of sums it up - liberty spikes and crazy colors in your hair have been out for a long time. These guys probably still do the pogo too. - Bob B.

TRIPMASTER MONKEY - *Goodbye Race* (Sire.) Pop-powered melodies that will appeal to fans of Ned's Atomic Dustbin in a flash. Tripmaster Monkey pieced together emotional bridges, plain old hardrock riffs and lyric instruction with a pace that assures them a spot as a contender in today's musical goodbye race. This is the happy insurance you've been looking for. - Greg M.

TROTSKY ICEPICK - *Hot Pop Hello* (SST) A stellar collection of outtakes and such. Trotsky is one of those bands that write excellent songs, but to be widely ignored. Their lyrics are often politically slanted, but they also possess a sense of humor rivaled by few. "Personal Ad" is an excellent example. More standouts include "20 Nights With Godzilla", "Lord Of The Medflies" and "Erase The Sun", whose melodies just as

cool as their titles. John Talley-Jones sounds a bit like Mark Edwards (from *My Dad Is Dead*), and Vitus Matlare's guitar is brilliant, as usual. - Jodi S.

TRUFFLE - *Nervous Laughter* (November Records, 530 Broadway, New York, NY, 10012) Deep southern jams pumped out of New Jersey, Truffle play the blues of jazz with a touch of funk verse not unlike the gruff somber side of the Spin Doctors, if they have one. From one listen, it's apparent that Truffle breaks into full-tilt improv mode on stage, demanding dance and tour accompaniment. Outside -- tie-dyes, brown beans and sweet smells of field and grass. Inside -- full to half suits, import beer and technical guitar talk. Truffle loves to tour. - Greg M.

UNWOUND - *New Plastic Ideas* (Kill Rock Stars, 120 E State St #418, Olympia WA 98501) This music is pretty typical for this label: Punk played in a chaotic style with less-than-heavy guitars. A lot of people I know swear by this band, but I don't see the light. The whole feedback-and-chaos style is getting a bit tired for me. - Matt G.

VELVET CRUSH - *Teenage Symphonies To God* (550 Music/Sony) Like the Windbreakers, the team of Rick Menck and Paul Chastain have - together and as solo artists - made some of the most beguiling, refreshing, entertaining, and downright enchanting pop music of the last ten years, with very little to show for it. Here are another dozen pop tunes that will tickle the heart of every closet Bay City Rollers fan. Play this in the morning and you will have a nicer day. How's that for a recommendation? - Jim T.

VEXED - *Cathexis* (C/Z Records) Largely an instrumental noise/rock album in the vein of Bitch Magnet or Cop Shoot Cop. When you can hear vocals, they're often disappointingly weak and don't match the heavy rhythm guitars and cliché'd popping bass. Besides being unoriginal, all the songs tend to sound the same. This is the music that Helmet popularized a few years back and now they've moved on to bigger and better things, we have to live with the sloppy seconds. - Danny E.

VOLEBEATS - *Up North* (SafeHouse, Box 5349, W Lebanon NH 03784) Way cool acoustic folkie tunes that made my head bob from side to side as I took in the myriad of rhythms. Fun and full of flavor, with a Johnny Cash influence now & then. Fine stuff. Buy. - Jamie T.

WEEZER - *Weezer* (Geffen) Four silly mooks who, on the CD cover, are dead ringers for the Feelies. They sound more like a cross between the Lemonheads ("My Name Is Jonas") and the Raspberries, especially when



ROOM ELEVEN

they borrow from the Beach Boys ("Buddy Holly," "Surf Wax America"). My favorite pop album of the summer, *Weezer* takes nerd rock into the age of the slacker (see: "Undone - the Sweater Song") with music that's light hearted but not stupid, catchy but not slick, and fun to hum in the shower. - Jim T.

WIGHAT - *This Came Out Of Me?* (Futurist/Mechanic) I used to see flyers for these guys all the time when I was a full-time New Yorker, but somehow I never had the opportunity to check them out. They play out all the time though, a definite plus in this rock 'n' roll world that all too often leaves the hard-working unnoticed and showers rewards on the merely lucky. Wighat bridges the 70's Rock of the Stones ("Shed") with the superfuzz of the 90's ("Letters"). This is more for garage-rocker than the punk enthusiast but it's miles away from the spooky deathmetal usually associated with this label. - Johnny P.

WOOL - *Boxed Set* (London) Take part of Puppets, add too much spirit for the music, and top it all off with a jumbled over-variance of styles. Fair at its high points, but they're screaming. - Jamie T.

WRETCHED ETHYL - *Ethyl Through The Window* (1727 Grant #3, Vancouver BC Canada V5L 2V6) More neo-New Wave with Blondie-ish



femme and slinky dance beats. Okay if you're into 1979 style pop but there's a bit too much of this stuff being revived now for my tastes. - Jim T.

YOUTH BRIGADE - *Happy Hour* (BYO) You know, Shawn Stern really should have been a lounge singer with that voice he's got. And don't these guys feel a little silly still calling themselves Youth Brigade? Middle-Aged Brigade would be a little more appropriate, since they must be older than Bill Stevenson. Musically, they still sound like they did when they actually were youths, though this one doesn't contain any essential punk anthems like earlier hits "Violence" or "Sink With California." - Jon C.

YOUTH GONE MAD - *Day Job* I'm having trouble putting my finger on exactly why I don't like this album. They're adequate musicians, the recording quality is fine, the woman vocalist is pretty good; maybe it's the "Youth" in the band name? Naw. Maybe it's because they're from New York and New York sickens me. No, that can't be it, since I actually do like a couple of bands from New York. Oh wait, I've got it! Now I remember: it's because one of these freaks was hung out under my tent during the rain storm at the Indie Rock Flea Market and generally annoyed the fuck out of me for about 30 minutes. Oh yeah. - Jon C.

ZEKE FIDDLER - *Waterproof* (SpinArt, Box 1798, New York NY 10156) This is another entry in the ever-growing field of alternative bands that all have the same general sound but aren't easily labeled without comparing them to another. This time they have good rock music with some keen vocal harmonies and a strummy, acoustic feeling. Hummable passages with the sound of, well, Radiohead, sort of. That's not quite it, but I thought I'd give you something to go on. - Jamie T.

COMPILATIONS

THE I-5 KILLERS (Schizophrenic, 233 Commercial St NE, Salem OR 97301) This collection of Portland bands has a nice selection of rockish newcomers as well as some familiar faces (the Wipers, Supersuckers), and not surprisingly, a few of these cuts really suck too. Bands to watch: Everclear, Thirty Ought Six, Ice Cream Headache (just for the name,) and Caveman Shoestore. - Jim T.

WAY SPLIT (Round Flat Records, 111 Lennox Ave, Buffalo NY 14226) Twenty-eight live songs, originally released on those Rebound Records flexi discs that that little kid used to sell at ABC No Rio, featuring Citizens Arrest, Go!, Profax, and Headfirst. The sound qualities varies - the Headfirst stuff is ok, the Go! tracks from their Pat Duncan/WFMU broadcast are great, and a lot of the rest sounds like bad bootlegs. I found the Profax and Headfirst tracks uninvolved but the Go! and Citizens Arrest songs brought back a lot of memories of ABC No Rio circa 1980 and how much fun that whole scene was back then. A nice little historical document and worth having if you're into any of the bands. Photos on the CD sleeve and lyrics would have been nice, though. - Jim T.

EMPTY RECORDS SAMPLER - (eMpTy Records; P.O. Box 12034; Seattle, WA 98102) Fuck yeah! Rad, rad, rad. A good selection of songs from a great selection of bands. I heard it and I immediately went out to my car, because this is driving music like it was meant to be. Bands like Crackerbash (awesome emo pop shit), Sicko (another great), Gas Huffer, Steel Wool, Girl Trouble, etc. Not a lemon in the bunch. And some of the songs were previously unreleased! - R.

EXPLOSION TEXAS CLAIMS ONE MILLION LIVES VOL. 1: Austin Underground Compilation - This CD documents what's going on in (you guessed it) the underground scene in Austin. Actually, there was a lot that caught by eye (ear, actually) here. Butterscotch Tuna have a rad sound, with slow guitars and female vocals. Thorns feels like Shudder, but stand out on their own. Sincola also female fronted, playing punk in the vein of L7. Usually, comps like this are long and clunky, but this one isn't. A lot of the songs are really good, and each band stands out in their own way. - Mat G.

SEXPOD

FIELD DAY (Sound O'The Sea, Box 18078, Cleveland OH 44118) It's not everyday that a man happens upon a really enjoyable compilation. Well, today I did. All

these cuts combine to form one hell of a package. Standouts include the opening two songs by Jehovah's Waitresses, but the fun doesn't end there. The disc progresses with lots of keen jangly and mellow REM-influenced music. This is damn good stuff. - Jamie T.

OUTPUNK DANCE PARTY (Outpunk, Box 170501, San Francisco CA 94117) This 11-band compilation is dedicated to the proposition that not all gays like disco, so there's a wide array of styles from lesbian, gay, and mixed punk bands. Highlights include CWA's hip-hoppy "Chickenhawk," Pansy Division's funny pop-punk tune "I Can't Sleep," and Jolt's emcore "Rise." Also represented: Mukilteo Fairies, Power Snatch, Sister George, Hyperdrive Kittens, Tribe 8, and more. - Jim T.

POPFEST COMPILATION (Popfest, P.O. Box 1198, Webster, NY 14580) 18 bands you've never heard of, mostly from the Rochester, NY area, playing lite college-rock. Really only two rockin' songs in this one, "Thin Line" by the Chinchillas and "The Greatest Song in the World" by Dog's Life, and they were at the end of the disc so I had to listen to 45 minutes of poor Smiths' impersonations before I got to them.

PUNK USA (Lookout) This compilation brings together 15 (16 actually, but we'll get to that later) punk bands, hand selected by Weasel. I never knew there were this many bands around who sound like the Ramones, but there are a lot of good tracks here and a few that even go in a different direction than the chord ramalama garage punk. Recommended: Pink Lincolns' snotty "Rats," the Queens notifier "Blabbermouth," 8 Bark's nihilistic "Give Up," Sinkhole's catchy "Casemaker," and Jawbreaker's "Sea Green Foam," with a lyric that proves that Blake majored in Beatnik poetry in

college. Screeching Weasel's "My Friends Are Getting Famous" deserves special mention; inspired by the show ■ which Jawbreaker opened for Nirvana at ■ major venue ■ well as Green Day's unexpected success, the song has Ben lamenting how all his old friends are moving up in the world with their bands while he's still "just" ■ punk rocker. Inspirational verse: "My friends ■ getting famous, they're on MTV/ Interviews in Rolling Stone, and I'm in Jersey Beat." Thanks, Ben. (Oh, there's ■ unlisted track by NYC's Garden Variety that ■ supposed to have been deleted but got mastered onto the CD by mistake. It comes right before the Jawbreaker track.) - Jim T.

SHREDS: Volume I (Shredder, 75 Plum Tree Lane #3, San Rafael CA 94901) Here's a great idea: With ■ many indie 7 inches coming out every year, most of them in very limited pressings, why not do ■ compilation of some of the best from around the country? Some of these bands also have albums out (Moist, Swirlies, No FX, Bracket, Mr T Experience,) others ■ hopelessly obscure, and others are definitely contenders. I especially liked the tracks by the Parasites, Karl Hendricks Trio, The Leonards, J Church, and Bracket. - Jim T.

SCREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS VOL II - By now we all know how venomous the belly of Austin, Texas is. Austin Throwdown Records has issued ■ thirteen artist warning of some of the most dangerous bands presently scurrying through the red-light district. Richard Head, Smell of Blood, Pocket Fishmen, Ball Peen, DKB, and more. (Austin Throwdown Records, P.O. Box 650196, Austin, TX, 78765-0196) - Greg M.

SUNDAY MATINEE: The Best Of NY Hardcore (Profile) When I think back to the CBGB hardcore matinees of the mid to late 80's, I usually shudder with memories of the senseless violence - bloodied faces being carried out of the mosh pit, innocent kids from the 'burbs being brutalized by psychotic skinheads - and by mindless jock-core bands like Youth Of Today that replaced melody and lyrics with adrenalin and testosterone. But these 17 cuts reminded me that along with all the bad, those shows had ■ energy and a spirit - and to some degree, a sound - that was very special, and that we'll ■ see again. And while I could live a full life without every hearing another note from Warzone, Sick Of It All, Sheer Terror, or Judge, it's great to hear these classic tracks by Murphy's Law, Leeway, Underdog, and American Standard again, especially since most of the original records are out of print. Just ■ question: Where's Gorilla Biscuits? - Jim T.

ULTRAMODERN OFFSPRING (Crank Records, PO Box 5467, Evanston, IL 60204) This Chicago band compilation contains four tracks each from TARPIT, BRAINKISS, and FIX YOUR WAGON, plus 6 tracks from GEL-TONES. These bands all sound fairly generic, sad to say. They all sound like they have bigger things in mind. It's also sad to think that the best parts of this compilation ■ the odd intros to the FIX YOUR WAGON cuts. The brightest musical spot ■ this CD, though, would have to be FIX YOUR WAGON's "Hook for You", which does stand out as something ■ bit more interesting within ■ sea of banality. That particular cut is ■ nice, slow, quiet one, sort of like something you might hear from Girls Against Boys. Overall, though, this compilation was ■ disappointment. - Paul S.

WE'RE ALL NORMAL AND WE WANT OUR FREEDOM (Alias) This album is ■ tribute to Arthur Lee and Love. It contains 21 songs such as 'Robert Montgomery,' 'Alone Again Or,' 'She Comes in Colors,' and 'Can't Explain' and 21 bands such as Eggs, Urge Overkill, Gobblehoof, Love Battery, Teenage Fanclub and a whole lot more. Not bad, even better if you like Love. - Greg M.

WHERE WOODSTOCK LIVES: THE BEST NEW MUSIC FROM THE TINKER ST. CAFE (Tinker St. Prod., ■ Yerry Hill Rd., Woodstock NY 12498) This is either an attempt to cash in on or ■ local reaction to the Woodstock '94 hype, but either way, I don't think it's going to get very far. A collection of 16 bands or solo performers who ■ somehow associated with Woodstock's Tinker St. Cafe, this compilation purports to be the real sound of the town. Hopefully, there ■ more bands in the area, because the music here is bland, bland, bland. "Where Woodstock Lives" has unconvincing blues, rap, R&B, hard rock -- a little bit of everything and it all sucks! From the song that sounds like ■ lame Chili Peppers outtake to the jangly alternative thing, none of it merits much more than a snore. I'm not going to name any of the bands included, because hopefully they'll go on to something better. Oh yeah. If you let the CD play a ways past the last song, you get ■ low volume acoustic song with what are probably supposed to be Jello Biafra-sounding vocals and ■ chorus of "Woodstock punks ■ full of shit." Not any more than anything here, I'll bet. -- Mike G.

BACK ISSUES

All back issues are \$2 postpaid

#35 (Summer '88) - ED GEIN'S CAR, Danzig, Patti Smith, Friction Wheel

#36 (Winter '89) - ULTRA VIVID SCENE, Crocodile Shop, Stetz, Bad Karma, Uncle Bob Touched Me, Scum Rock

#37 - Sold Out

#38 (Fall '89) THE SECRET LIVES OF PUNK ROCK DRUMMERS; American Standard, Orifice, Shades Apart, Kings X, White Zombie pinup

#39 (Winter, 1990) BASS PLAYERS: Things That Go Thump In The Night; Das Damen, Supertouch, Big Wheel, Best of 1989 lists

#40 (Summer 1990) KRYST THE CONQUEROR (Ex-Misfits Tell All); Jawbreaker, Adrenalin O.D., Bedlam Hour

#41 (Fall 1990) YO LA TENGO, Nine Inch Nails, Crawlpappy, Lost tour diary, Chikara

#42 (Winter 1991) WEEN: The Untold Story; Lucy Brown, Anthrophobia, Invasion Of The Generic Funk Weenies Pt. 1

#43 (Summer 1991) BEWITCHED, Butthole Surfers, Junk Monkeys, Springhouse, Deviators

#44 (Fall/Winter 1991) SINGLES: Special Report On The Underground World of 7-Inch Vinyl; Rollins, Fiendz

#45 (Winter 1992) NIRVANA: Talkin' Shit With The Gods Of Grunge; Undead, Our American Cousins

#46 (Summer 1992) 10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE; False Prophets: A History Of NY Hardcore, Firehose, Lester Bangs interview, Trusty, Sweet Lizard Illtet, L7

#47 (Fall 1992) SCREECHING WEASEL; Faith No More, Senseless Things, Letch Patrol, Lemonheads

#48 (Winter 1993) QUICK SAND; Down By Law's Dave Smalley, EMF, ■■■ blows us off, Dandelion Fire

#49 (Summer 1993) NEW JERSEY: A State Of The State Report; Whatever Happened To Hoboken?, New Brunswick Scene Report, South Jersey - White Trash Heaven, NJ Hip Hop, Hardcore Scene Report by Mat Gard, Black Train Jack, Sons Of Elvis

#50 (Winter 1993) GIRLS AGAINST BOYS; New York's Club Scene: A Post-Spin Doctors Analysis Of What Went Wrong; Nudeswirl; Garden Variety, Cucumbers; G.G. Allin obituary

#51 (Spring 1994) IS PUNK DEAD? A Special Report, with Jawbox, Green Day, Lawrence Livermore, Kent McClard; Saidchild; Bernie's Fix; SXSW Diary;

SOLD OUT



#2 FANZINE #1 (Keith Werwa, 512 E 5 St #2/4, NY NY 10009 \$1) You've all heard about Generation X, now here **#2 FANZINE** Generation Y (or maybe X: The Next Generation?) Anyway, editor Keith is "barely 20 years old," and **#2 FANZINE** his zine to ruminate on things he thinks about. That includes a lot of band interviews (Seaweed, Slant 6, New Bomb Turks, Edsel, Standoff, Yuppicide,) his thoughts on Nixon's death, reviews, a "where **#2 FANZINE** they now" piece about tv stars of the past, and **#2 FANZINE** on. Lots to read in this debut ish.

3 WAY STREET #1 (28332 PV Drive East, RPV, CA 90274 2 stamps) This is by Amanda and Sam, whom I assume are going together. Anyway, Amanda visits San Francisco, Sam interviews Rig. Sam rants about men's rights, they both review records and interview the person who runs the Anti-BBS. The zine looks really nice, esp. for a first issue.

10 THINGS JESUS WANTS YOU TO KNOW #8 (1407 NE 45 St #17, Seattle WA 98105 \$1.50) This issue, Jesus wants you to know about the Unsane, Christopher Robin, Killdozer, Whipped, NoFX, Zoinks, and the Voodoo Glow Skulls, all of whom **10 THINGS JESUS WANTS YOU TO KNOW** interviewed, along with **10 THINGS JESUS WANTS YOU TO KNOW** record, zine and show reviews & lots of ads.

360 #14 (PO Box 81623, San Diego CA 92138 \$1) A really well put together zine with good interviews and well-written reviews. Like everyone else on the (punk) planet, the editors find themselves embroiled in the corporate-vs.-punk debate on the letters page, then **360** on to chat with fluf, Unsane, Uncle Tupelo, Slowdive, and Manhole. Good issue.

394 OCONEE #4 (Pattie Kleinke, PO Box 1026, NY NY 10023 \$3) Pattie's R.E.M. fanzine comes with a color-xerox cover and a pull-out pinup of Mike Stipe this issue, along with an analysis of the lyrics to "Gardening At Night" and a history of R.E.M. t-shirts.

A VISIONARY'S DREAM #1 (PO Box 215, Hightstown NJ 08520) Jersey Beat's metal maven Hayley Greif debuts her own zine, a headbanger's delight featuring an eclectic array of underground metal bands - Paradise Lost, The Organization, Broken Hope, Thought Industry, and lots more. Simple desktop layouts and a nice clean look make this easy on the eyes.

ALARM CLOCK #22 (Allen Salter, Box 1551, Royal Oak MI 48066 \$2) A half-size zine with a nice look and some decent interviews, although they don't include a preface so you often have an idea who is being interviewed (i.e. Geko, Crashblack, Greg Weber...not exactly household names.) Also show and record reviews.

ALLEY CAT - #1 (Lee Reiherzer, 820 Frederick St Box E, Oshkosh WI 54901 \$1) A silly, entertaining half-sized zine with a long piece on puke, a male jock who remembers what it **ALLEY CAT** like growing breasts (the side effects of taking steroids,) and the effects of beer on romance.

(ALMOST) NOTHING BUT RECORD (TAPE & VIDEO) REVIEWS Fall '94 (Seidboard World Ent., Box 137, NY NY 10012 \$2.50) Mykel Board, the MRR columnist you love to hate, returns with what may be the last issue of his peripatetic reviews-only zine. There **(ALMOST) NOTHING BUT RECORD** skills of reviews of things Mykel gets in the mail (except he won't review anything on a major label.) This issue also **(ALMOST) NOTHING BUT RECORD** with a short cassette of spoken word performances by Mykel.

ANNOYANCE #7 (Vassar College Box 3092, Poughkeepsie NY 12601 \$1) A cool little half-size punkzine This ish has interviews with Edsel and Shades. Apart, lots of show and record reviews, a page where people from bands draw

what they think a wombat looks like, a page **ANNOYANCE** informercials... you get the idea. Some of the pages are a bit hard to read due to poor copying and I wish he'd do something with the photos so you could **ANNOYANCE** them, but overall this is well worth your buck.

ARTHUR'S COUSIN, Vol.2 No. 1 (Joshua Handley, 2501 Wickersham Lane #2132, Austin TX 78741 \$1+stamp) A mix of usuals (concert and record reviews, poems, cartoons) with editorials on gender and race. I flipped through it pretty fast.

BABY SUE, Vol. 4 No. 3 (Box 1111, Decatur GA 30031 \$2) Although Baby Sue has record reviews and the occasional interview (although this issue's is with Jesus) (!), it's mostly dedicated to offbeat fiction, poetry and these weird cartoon strips with titles like "Tips On How To Be A Stupid Fag."

BACK OF A CAR #1 (4636 MPO, Vancouver BC Canada V6B 4A1, or e-mail beeman@mindlink.bc.ca \$3) Given the sizable cult of critics, fans, and especially other musicians who have come to revere Alex Chilton's mid-seventies pop group Big Star, a fanzine like Back Of A Car makes perfect sense. The debut issue pays equal attention to Big Star's past and present, as editor Judith Beeman examines the recent Big Star reunion (including a gig-by-gig diary by Ken Stringfellow of the Posies, who joined original members Chilton and Jody Stephens for the reunion tour,) reprints the original New York Times review of Big Star's first album, and reviews Alex Chilton's recent solo album and live performances. The zine also spares a little space for comics, short fiction, and reviews of Chiltonesque pop-rockers like Chris Stamey. And for all those frustrated amateur musicians who could never figure out the chords, there's even a transcription of the song "Back Of A Car," complete with chord diagrams.

BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED #6 (Richard Freeman, 130 W Limestone St, Yellow Springs OH 45387 \$2) A newsletter-style zine dedicated to porn, although there isn't a single dirty picture included. Instead you get essays on working as a bondage model, tips from a pro on making porn videos, a piece on why foreskins **BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED** better, and kinky letters from readers.

BELLWETHER (612 Lakevue Dr, Willow Grove PA 19090 \$1) The first of many straightedge zines interviewed this issue. This one is largely distinguished by the editor's atrocious spelling (hee hee) but otherwise you get all the usuals - puff-piece interviews with sXe bands asking broad political questions ("What do you think of religion?" "How can we stop racism?" **BELLWETHER** if a bunch of 18 year olds with guitars would have a clue...), lots of photos, and the usual sXe broadsides against brothers who have lost the edge (inspirational verse: "I won't close my eyes to you anymore. Your ignorance won't go unchecked...") There's a piece decrying how violence in sports (in this case, hockey) incites violence in society, but I've come a lot closer to getting my brains bashed in a straightedge shows than at any hockey game I've ever attended.

BEN DEAD #24 (PO Box 3166, Hollywood CA 90028 \$4) This is the "Black" issue, which the editors take a couple of ways - black as in African American, black **BEN DEAD** in black humor (including a hilarious mini-zine, "Brett Is Dead," which speculates on what might happen if Epitaph Records' Brett Gurewitz followed Kurt Cobain's lead and killed himself over the sudden success of his label,) and so on. More cool shit packed into this zine than I can list, just get it.

BLINK #6 (16901 NE 8 St, N Miami Beach FL 33162 \$2) A nice mixture of personal and punk zineage, with lots of columns about non-musical matters, some local Miami news coverage, and then interviews with bands like

Killdozer, Peach, and Sheer Terror.

BLOODRED (MellyXMel, PO Box # Sta. C, Toronto Canada M7L 3M7 \$3) This zine is actually published in Germany (in English) but has a Canadian distributor for mailorder. Bloodred combines radical leftist politics with punk rock; besides interviews with Four Walls Falling, Marxman, and a really confrontational # with Integrity, there are pieces on Malcolm X, the new Nazi menace, the film Schindler's List, and more.

BOVINE GAZETTE #2 (Mad Dog Prod's, PO Box 2263, Pasadena CA 91102 \$1) A fanzine dedicated to the daily needs of cows. A lot of silly comix and a sillier interview with a doctor who gets carried away with his train metaphors. I dunno about this one.

BOWLING FOR DOUGHNUTS #1 (3115 W 6 St, Suite C Dept 103, Lawrence KS 66049 \$2) Xeroxed punkzine with Pennywise, No FX, the Meatmen, 7 Seconds, Offspring, Jermflux, opinion columns, reviews, comix, and photos.

BRV (11473 Chautauqu Tr, Brecksville OH 44141 \$2) This is basically a travelzine ala' Cometbus, about editor Al's adventures on the road, along with several pages of photos he took along the way and some zine contact addresses. The highpoint of this issue is the rear ender that gets Al and his carmates carted off to the hoosegow for a visit.

BRUCE ON A STICK #1 (Box 416, Tarrytown NY 10591 \$3) One of my favorite # zines, ostensibly dedicated to the career of Bruce (Evil Dead, Brisco County Jr.) Campbell, with lots of nutty movie-star worship directed towards other stars too. This issue is mostly Bruce stuff but there's a page dedicated to James Dean and an appreciation of Ted (Seaquest DSV) Raimi. Way cool.

BUBBA'S LIVE BAIT #1 (PO Box 3133, Johnson City TN 37602 \$1) Not too many Southern zines actually have any Southern flavor but Bubba's Live Bait is as tasty a mess of catfish 'n grits. A hand-lettered perzine, #4 includes memoirs of mailbox baseball (that's where good ole boys go racin' down the road swattin' at mailboxes with a baseball bat,) an editorial that begins "why do rednecks procreate?," lists of things that make the editors "groovy" and "grumpy," and the editor's continuing travel diary.

BUDGET #3 (% Chrissy, 2707 Valmont #211A, Boulder CO 80511 \$1) This issue is a bit dated but it's worth picking up for the many good hardcore

photos # well # good interviews with Chino Horde, Hoover, and Jawbreaker.

CHAIRS MISSING (Aug. 94) (PO Box 522, Stratford CT 06497 \$3) A really well written zine with very small print, with lots of interviews and reviews. This issue has Alcohol Funnycar, Arcwelder, Drive Like Jehu, Mule, Prisonshake, Rodan, and Seven Year Bitch. It's interesting how John Reis from Jehu totally wimps out of discussing exactly how Rocket From The Crypt and Jehu got signed to Interscope for megabucks while making # sound like the most punk-rock happenstance in the world.

CHILDREN OF A FAR GREATER GOD #4 (221 Ashmore Rd 2nd Fl, Queens Pk, London W9 3DB England \$4 ppd) A fanzine devoted to Married: With Children, including anything the cast members do outside the show. This issue has an interview with Amanda Bearse (Marcy D'Arcy on the show) about coming out # the first avowed lesbian on primetime tv (yeah!) movie and book reviews, and some letters from similarly obsessed fans. Can I get a "Whoa, Bundy!"

CIRCA #1 and 2 (216 Mayer St, Reading PA 19606 \$1) A messy little half-size # still in its infancy but with a lot of promise thanks to the better-than-average interviews. Editor James Knoblauch asks Southern Culture On The Skids if they speak with the # drawl back home, for instance. And when he asks the Poster Children what they find stimulating in the arts these days, the # is "Computer hackers and Beavis # Butthead."

DAMN PUNK #5.6 (Chris Reynolds, 105 Springwood Way, S. San Francisco CA 94080 2 stamps) Chris is 15, likes industrial/grunge music like NIN, goes to high school, has some weird adventures, writes poetry and fiction, and tells you all about it in his perzine. Sloppy DIY pasteup layouts, hand lettering and bad typing, no computers... zine-making the old-fashioned way!

DEEP WATER #1 (PO Box 211, Danville PA 17821 \$2) A really interesting new zine with nice layouts and offbeat articles - there's a piece about the Hegin (OH) Pigeon Shoot, a day when everyone in town goes out into the woods and legally shoots all the pigeons, a piece on the Nixon era war on drugs, an interview with Jimmy Johnson of Forced Exposure, and some reviews.

DIAGNOSIS #1 (PO Box 101896, Denver CO 80250 \$2) This reminds me of an alternative-rock version of No Answers, with big bold layouts and good interviews # photos. This issue has Cold Crank, Buffalo Tom, Heatmiser,

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Rocket From The Crypt, and 7 Year Bitch; show, record, and zine reviews; and lots of good photos. Well worth checking out.

DIGESTOR #1 (Dave Urbano, PO Box 154, New Brunswick NJ 08903 \$1) This is basically a newsletter from Dave, who plays in several bands (and writes for this zine) with a lot of good advice for bands on how to get bookings. Since it actually includes names and phone numbers of local club bookers, it's definitely a worthwhile acquisition for anyone looking for gigs in the NJ/NYC area.

DON'T ASK SKATEZINE #7 (8647 Cox Rd, Indianapolis IN 46221 \$1) A halfsize zine with some skateboard pics, a short intw with skater Tony Hawk, a talk with the editor of John Doe Zine, and some short reviews.

EVIL EYE (% Larry Grogan, 3 Tulip Ct, Jackson NJ 08527 SASE) Larry always has something worth reading in his zine. Issue 9 has an excellent piece on Kurt Cobain's suicide, some history of psychedelic rock, and a page of record reviews. #10 includes an appreciation of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, thoughts on Nico, and a rather rude goodbye to Richard Nixon. #11 includes a look at the psychedelia, The Orb, and a short editorial on universal health care.

ENVY THE DEAD #4 (PO Box 30033, Kansas City MO 64112) A crazy new half-size zine with inspired gonzo writing and layouts. And unlike most punkzines, these dudes even listen to hip hop. There's way too many articles to list (and most of them are off the wall that it would take forever to explain them,) but a few of them include Lisa Suckdog experience, ode to Robitussin (as a recreational drug,) four why Public Enemy are the best rap group, and a review of the Beastie Boys that doesn't mention any of their music.

EXPLOITATION RETROSPECT #39 (Box 1155, Haddonfield NJ 08033 \$1.75) This half size zine boasts cool layouts and well written articles - has an interview with Redd Kross' Jeff McDonald, something on Meatloaf's comeback (including a great recipe for, yup, meat loaf,) and reviews of zines, movies, and records. features a long retrospective on the career and art of Frank Zappa. Neat-o.

FACTSHEET (PO Box 170099, San Francisco CA 94117 \$3.95) FF5 is still the zine you turn to when you want to find out about other zines, with hundreds of reviews in a dozen different categories - sex, drugs, rock n roll, the occult, comix, poetry, and how to fix your kitchen sink - if there's a zine about it, it's probably in FF5. This issue also includes a 140-term glossary so if

you're new to the zine scene, you can find out what all those weird words like IRC, SIG, APA, and Perzine mean.

FILLER #1 (588 Dogwood Lane, Waterloo ONT Canada N2L 4X9 \$2) This zine manages a tricky task - interviewing a lot of over-interviewed subjects and still getting something interesting out of them. Included are Fugazi, Barbara Manning, Drive Like Jehu, Gerard Cosloy, Pavement, and Wake Ooloo. Plus reviews, photos, the usuals. Cool.



FREE FOR ALL #9/10 (PO Box 463, Wilmington NC 28402 \$1) The title says it all, this is a free for all of whatever comes out of the editor's colorful mind - stories, poems, fantasies, in all very small type and slapped together

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with abandon. Fun to leaf through but ■ pain to read cover to cover.

GENETIC DISORDER #12 (PO Box 151362, San Diego CA 92175 \$2) Well-done zine with some local San Diego coverage and well-written reviews. The highlight of this issue is the rogue's gallery of mass murderers from San Diego.

GOGGLEBOX #2/3 (PO Box 250402, NYC 10025 \$1+stamps) I'm not sure about the address during the summer since it's a college p.o. box. This zine has contributions by girls and boys. The two issues I saw had a little bit of everything from grade school reminiscences to fun tour diaries to ■ love letter to Fugazi, all very personal and intense which makes me think of it as a grl zine.

GREEDY BASTARD #10 (PO Box 1014, Yonkers NY 10704 \$2) Greedy Bastard is by Bill Florio, ■ of the coolest guys in the NY punk ■■■■ and ■ member of the funnypunk band Bugout Society (whose members usually contribute to the zine.) ■ enjoys taking pokes at punk's sacred cows and this issue has a hilarious interview with Earth Crisis which explains why they're breaking up ("Zippy: Well, I got my GED and got accepted to SUNY, I'm going to major in dance. Byron and Seth want to spend more time with their girlfriends and Bif isn't into ■ anymore." I guess you have to know a little about Earth Crisis to get how funny that is, but you get the idea... the rest of the zine is more of the same zany shit.

GRIND ■ (Box 2830 Mesa AZ 85214 \$2) This zine has a little bit of everything - killer cartoons, ■ good letters page, great local coverage of the Arizona scene, national bands (this issue has Velocity Girl and Zippun,) lots of photos, and ■ original cover by Jeff Gaither. Definitely recommended.

GYRATE #1 (Renee Williams, 832 Clinton Ct, Hazelton PA 18201 \$2) A sloppy pasted-up hand printed grl zine. Samiam answers some questions by mail, the editor drools over the teen hunks in Weston, "Diary Of A Confused Girl," some reviews, recipes, 10 steps to putting out your own 7 inch, and ■ short interview with NJ's Dog Pound.

HELL BOUND #8 (1001 Cooper Pt #140-194, Olympia WA 98502 \$2)

Interviews with Rancid and No FX, recipes, obituaries, reviews, comix, all kinds of cool shit are crammed into this messy but fun-to-read punkzine. Definitely worth a gander.

HITCH #1, #2 (Rodd Lott, 5504 N Tulsa, OK City, OK 73112 \$3.50) This is sort of a homemade Spy magazine devoted to the movies. The comedy is hit-and-miss (and mostly misses) but the second issue showed a lot of improvement, with more substance than attitude and ■ good piece on one of my favorite shows, Mystery Science Fiction Theater 3000.

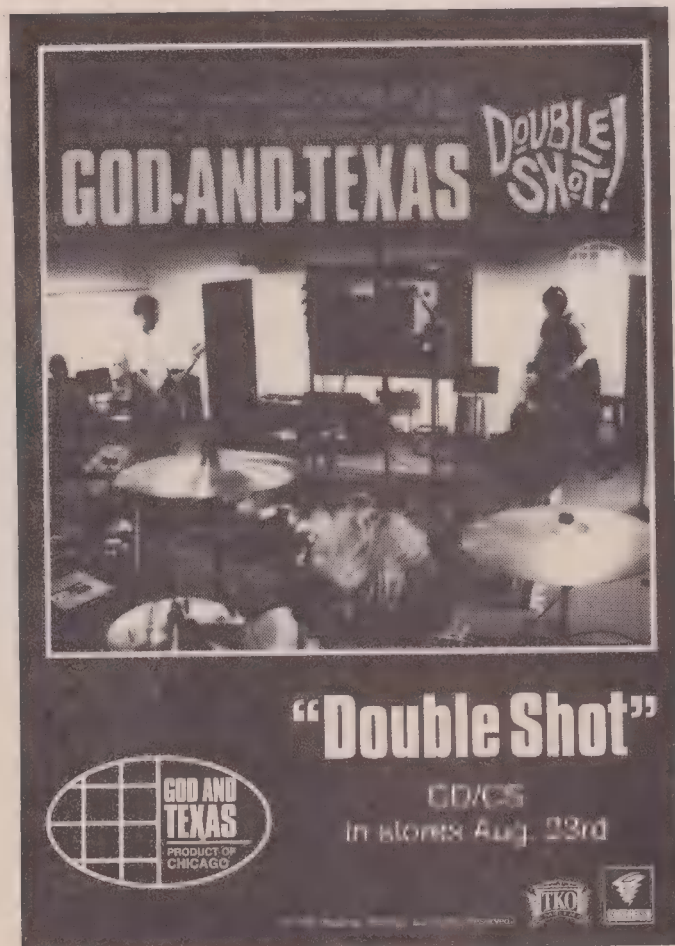
I, YEAST ROLL #78 (Vermiform, Box 12065, Richmond VA 23241 \$1) In case you were wondering whatever happened to Sam McPheeters, Born Against broke up, he and Adam moved to Virginia, and he put out this fanzine, more or less picking up from his Dear Jesus zine. Most of this first issue is dedicated to a pungent and witty tour diary of Born Against's last days and an interview with Ben Hamper.

I AM NOTHING #1 (4462 Freeman Rd, Marietta GA 30062 \$2) One of the most striking-looking zines I've ■ in ■ while. The editor is straightedge but the text is limited to poems and song lyrics set against artwork and photos, so there isn't a lot of editorializing or those stupid sXe interviews that all read the same.

INSIGHT #2 (PO Box 51592, Kalamazoo MI 49005 \$4) Four bucks is a lot for ■ zine that doesn't come with a 7 inch, but this does have a nice color glossy cover and lots to read inside. Rants again punk and jazz start things off, lots of interviews (Jesus Lizard, God & Texas, White Zombie, GWAR, and Motorhead, just to name ■ view) illustrated with flamboyant artwork, and layouts that don't look like any other zine I can recall. Pretty cool, even with the hefty pricetag.

INTAKE MANIFOLD ■ (PO Box 12266, Mpls MN 55412 \$2) A tabloid-newspaper zine mostly devoted to reviews. #3 also includes an interview with Bill Laswell.

KEEPING IN TOUCH #2/3/4 (27 E Central Ave #R5, Paoli PA 19301 SASE) Formerly In Touch. K.I.T. is a newsletter dedicated to spreading the word



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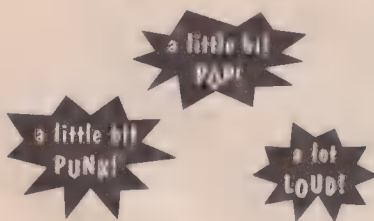
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about unsigned band demos, zines, and other facets of DIY culture. Also includes contact addresses of clubs, radio stations, studios, etc. A good deal for bands and scenesters who need to network.

KETCHUP #6 (3603 Sexton St, Alexandria VA 22309 \$1) This is one of those short, spacey zines that you leaf through and then wonder what you missed. There's an editorial on love, a list of rock stars who ought to die, Bill and Hilary paper dolls, an interview with a Delaware band called Explosive Kate (who sound kind of cool,) and reviews.

KITSCHY KITSCHY COUP (1770 Mass Ave. #163, Cambridge MA 02140 \$1) Movies, Manson, zines, record reviews, cool stuff you can buy in thrift stores, and a true ouija board story.

LIVE BEAT #3 (Yael Grauer, 3238 Lenape dr, Dresher PA 19025) Yael talks about personal passions, from photography and karate to the Swamp Zombies. Plus there are reviews and how-to pieces.

MANTRA (PO Box 74, Carte Madera CA 94976 \$2) There are zines about just about anything - this one is dedicated to "the ever expanding modern ambient scene." The editors embrace ambient music as a means toward spirituality although they also review albums by techno artists like Moby and Meat Beat Manifesto who consider ambient sounds a means toward getting fucked up on the dancefloor. Different strokes...

MOLE #7 (PO Box Merrifield VA 22116 \$3) A zine "by, for, and about the nihil generation," with fiction, comix, interviews with Cake Kitchen, Scrawl, Cop Shoot Cop, Jeffrey Lee Pierce, reviews, and talk with someone who's a grip in the movies. They put a little different spin on the old punkzine genre which makes this a good read.

MOO COW #9/#10 (38 Larch Circle, Belmont MA 02178 \$2) Issue 9 is mostly devoted to fiction, of the teenage-autobiographical-read-too-much-J.D. Salinger variety, while #10 is the punk rock issue, full of big phat photos of bands. Both issues have short think pieces from the editor and a reviews section. And I want to see what #11 is like!

LEVITY #1 (6904 S 12th St #1705, Tacoma WA 98465 \$2) Gothic/punk/industrial - if they wear black, this zine likes it. Lots of obscure bands like Faith & Disease, Sub Version, Ninth Circle, along with reviews and poetry.

LOOKOUT #39 (PO Box 11374, Berkeley CA 94712 \$2) This is Lawrence Livermore's zine, which expands on a lot of the ideas you've read about in his MRR (and Punk Planet) columns. In this issue, Larry takes a look at what's become of Berkeley's punk spirit, includes a tour diary of his band The Potatomen, throws in some short stories, a couple of reviews, and a lot of letters.

MUDLARK (73 S Lodge Ln, Lombard IL 60148 \$1.50) Interviews with the Queens, Bollweevils, Mighty Mighty Bosstones, reviews, photos, a piece on cool shirts, some tips on doing a zine, and fun with the postal service.

NARCISSUS #2 (Molli, 818 E 6th St, Weiser ID 83672 \$1) A riot grrl and Mac are a dangerous combination, this zine proves. It's almost like reading your kid sister's diary - lots of private musings, gushing about this or that, notes scribbled in the margins, lots of inside jokes about people you don't know, stuff about things at school that piss you off... I feel like a visitor to another planet when I'm reading this. A couple of photos or pictures wouldn't hurt, though.

NEGATIVE INK #1 (309 Van Name Ave, Staten Island NY 10303 \$1) Not as negative as the name implies, this kind of rambles - there's something about car insurance being a ripoff, an interview with Staten Island's Eve's Plum, some good comics by the editors and an interview with cartoonist Evan Dorkin (who's obviously a big influence.)

NIPPLE HARDNESS FACTOR (PO Box 461778, Los Angeles CA 90046 \$2) Lots of 7 inch reviews, all given lots of space in imaginative layouts. Not quite as dense as it should be given how many 7 inches are out there these days, but a fun read if you're into checking out singles and fun to look at.

NO LONGER A FANZINE #5 (142 Frankford Ave, Blackwood NJ 08012 \$1) Editor Joseph Gervasi has made NLAF one of the most consistently well written and interesting zines around, especially because of his penchant for speaking his mind and being open to all

sorts of controversial ideas often inflames P.C. types. This issue includes interviews with the editor of Fuck Zine, white supremacist James Mason, a tour diary, hate mail from readers, a piece about working in a library, and lots more.

NOISY JEWELRY #2 (She-Ra, 395 Pharr Rd #302, Atlanta GA 30305 \$2) Comix about coffee, life, and men. done by a funny grll writer.

OCULUS July/Aug. (PO Box 148, Hoboken NJ 07030 \$1) Mad Libs with the band Tree, 7 inch reviews, interviews with Engine Kid, Fudge, Brian Eno, and fluf, all wrapped up in clean, modern layouts. Classy.

ONE IS SILVER THE OTHER IS GOLD #1 (625 SW 10 Ave #291B, Portland OR 97205 2 stamps) A silly 8-page punkzine with a Bedspins intw and a test to see how PC you are.

OPTION PARALYSIS #3 (Marty Langley, 8114 Adair Lane, Springfield VA 22151 \$1) This issue reveals the secret identities of the Men In Black (turns out they're Jake and Elwood, the Blues Brothers.) pieces on hockey and baseball mania, live reviews of Superchunk and Luna, and record reviews. Interesting layouts.

ORIGINAL COOL (1533 Sea Breeze Trail #201, Virginia Beach VA 23452 \$2) Rockabilly, psychobilly, and fifties rock n roll are what the folks at Original Cool find cool. The zine seems equally comfortably writing knowledgeable tributes to bygone greats like Duane Eddy while paying their props to today's rockabilly cats too (Blasters, Tav Falco, Slim Jim from the Stray Cats, etc.) Every issue has lots of great photos and articles you won't find anywhere else, guaranteed (like a piece on Elvis imitators in Japan!) Far out.

OUT OF BOUNDS #2 (PO Box 4809, Alexandria VA 22303 \$2) Former Jerseyite Tom Wheeler is one of the poobahs at this good lookin' new zine with an intellectual bent. Whether the writers are talking about punk rock or CIA death squads, Out Of Bounds reads like a well-written term paper (or at least an article out of The Nation). How many punk zines do you know that have articles on "Asset Forfeiture?" But there are some record reviews too.

PEPITO'S FOLDER #2 (% Brandon Yu, 1134 W Loyola, Box 0073, Chicago IL 60626 \$1) Anyone who reads the Alternative/Punk message boards on America OnLine is familiar with a character known as Pepito Pea. This is his fanzine, a messy cut-and-paste perzine with lots of punk attitude. There's some Chicago scene news, lot of feisty live reviews, Pepito's conversation with the PMS Hotline, and some 7inch reviews. Funny and fresh.

POP WATCH #5 (PO Box 4402156, Somerville MA 02144 \$4) One of those new-fangled zines with the Raygun-type layouts that make you go blind trying to follow the text. But it's well written and beautifully produced (which is why it costs \$4) with an intriguing selection of interviews - Guided By Voices, Baiter Space, Nightblooms, Gas Huffer -plus album and single reviews.

POWERBUNNY 4X4 #3 (9 Oxford St 2nd Fl, New Brunswick NJ 08901 \$1) Jeff Scavone gives up the scoop on what's new in the Hub City, including short pieces on Mildred Pierce, Urchins, Acetone, and lots of record reviews.

PSYCHO MOTO #1 (%Ethan Minsker, 45 Ave #2, NYC 10009 \$2) Poetry, prose, an editorial debunking riot grll-ism, interviews with Orange 9mm and Clutch, and record & zine reviews. Nice looking zine and plenty to read.

PUMPKIN SEED (229 Westmount Blvd, Thornhill, Ontario, CANADA L4J 7W2 \$2) A punk zine with a short attention span - everything is in big type and no more than a page or two long. Unwound, Bridget Cross, Trumans Water, Edsel, and lots of reviews.

PUNK PLANET #1 & 2 (PO Box 1711, Hoboken NJ 07030 \$2) A terrific debut issue put together by a collective of punks who "met" via e-mail on America OnLine. The idea was to use Maximum Rock N Roll as a role model but without that zine's "punker than thou" attitude. There are columns from a variety of viewpoints (including yours truly and Larry Livermore,) interviews, reviews, rants from e-mail anarchist Spike Anarkie, who runs amok on AOL's message boards, and lots more.

R.A.D. #3.14 (826 Old Charlotte Pike E, Franklin TN 37064 \$2) Musings and rantings on the music scene by the Rev. Keith A. Gordon, including a long chat with singer Sass Jordan, rapping about rap, a review of Manic Pop Thrill, and well-written reviews. Definitely a little different and worth reading.

RAGE (PO Box 1289, Lk Worth FL 33460 \$2) Fiction, poetry, and think pieces on a variety of subjects, from writer's block (from the editor,) to Kurt

Cobain. #4 sports a much-improved look, with elegant desktop layouts and some stunning candid photography, poems, reviews, and rages.

RATIONAL INQUIRER #1 (2050 W 56 St #32-221, Hialeah FL 33016 \$1.50) A new newsprint zine that's trying to keep Miami on the map, now that the area's most well-known zine, Scrape, has called it quits. MRR-style layouts and poetry, fiction, columns, interviews with Splat and Cereal, and reviews. A nice start although it's a bit too much like all those other MRR-inspired zines around.

RAW POGO ON THE SCAFFOLD #11 (2205 Walnut St #3F, Philadelphia PA 19103 \$1) Rants and raves, an interview with Philly band Kitschkao, record reviews, and a couple of scene reports.

RIDE ON, BABY: THE GIGOLO AUNTS FANZINE (120 W 44 St #704, New York NY 10036) When the Gigolo Aunts were ready to release their first LP on RCA Records, they decided against using the usual corporate record label bio and commissioned this fanzine-type thing. And it's cool. It captures the gushy gee-whiz feel of the band's music, provides lots of silly teen zine tidbits about the group, and even has a funny photo feature on "Rock Star Poses" in which the band members portray different rock cliches ("The Burnout," "The Sex Face," etc.)

RIOT SQRRL ZINE #1 (116 I St, Arcata CA 95521 \$1) A "riot grll" zine for grlls and boys, with poems, stories, and rants (many on the topics of equality, feminism, racism, etc.)

ROCKTOBER #9, 10 (1507 53rd St #617, Chicago IL 60615 \$2) Chicago certainly has its share of zines these days, but this one is really off the wall. Rockabilly/50's retro coverage is interspersed with regular features on Sammy Davis Jr., comix, and a bonus. #9 has a mini zine dedicated to the theme "The Worst Show I Ever Went To" which is a lot of fun, and features on Chuck Berry, Screaming Jay Hawkins, and Flaming Lips; #10 has "The Rocktober Hall Of Greatness" poster, gold-leaf caricatures of different bands and music idols on heavy cardboard stock (which would have been even cooler on sticker paper) and more eclectic music coverage, including Wayne Cochran, Boredoms, Southern Culture On The Skids, a piece on baseball and rock n roll, and rock 'n' roll on tv thru the ages. Offbeat and worth a look.

RX: DEATH #1 (PO Box 642, G.C. SC 29445 \$1) A cut-and-paste zine dedicated to death. This issue is devoted to clippings about Kurt Cobain's suicide. It's actually kind of interesting to read what daily newspaper writers and national columnists (like the NY Times wonderful Anna Quindlen) had to say at the time, like the small-town rockcrit from Charleston, SC who says that Kurt Cobain's singing was "almost" as good as Axl Rose.

SCHALLPLATTEN #2 (12545 SW Fairfield, Beaverton OR 97005 \$1) A Portland scene report, an expose on Jawbreaker's ties to organized crime (a parody, kids!), and a lot of ranting and raving make this mini zine an amusing read through.

SCHEMATICS #1 (3017 Barnhard Dr #209, Tampa FL 33613 \$1) sXe zine with all interviews: Avail, Iconoclast, Earth Crisis, and graphic artist John Yates.

SCREAMING FROM INSIDE #3 (PO Box 13044, Mpls MN 55414 \$2) This could be called Carissa Explains It All, since the editor's name is Carissa and most of the zine is given over to her ramblings on life. There are also letters, short interviews with Avail and Naked Aggression, and reviews.

SECOND GUESS #11 (PO Box 9382, Reno NV 89507 \$2) Editor Bob Conrad knows punk and Second Guess always makes worthwhile reading. This issue, Bob gives a lesson in the economics of punk, talks about the travails of promoting shows, tells us about his tour in the band Zoinks, and includes Donny The Punk's memoir of being raped in prison.

SECRETS (Joe Voodoo, Box 1433, Culver City CA 90232 \$1) Short piece of fiction and non-fiction with a weird feeling, like the piece about the fellow who develops a warl on his hand and becomes obsessed by it, or the confessions of a onetime stripper. You like to keep a few zines in the bathroom for those special moments when you've got some time to kill and need something to read, this is a good zine to have on hand.

SLACK #8, #9, #11 (%Wizard Graphics, 466 Woodward Ave, Buffalo NY 14214 \$2) A really nice looking desktop zine with tidy graphics. Every issue has a centerfold of the editors' current listening faves and then a theme to the rest of the issue. #8 is dedicated to beer, #9 to dead rock stars; #9 includes True Crime stories. All do a good job covering their themes. As the editor says, slackers work harder than anyone else, they just don't like to work 9 to 5.

SLEEPYFOOT #2, #3 (Mike Thain, 1636 E Main St #202, Kent OH 44240 \$1) This is a Taozine, so every issue includes an exploration of editor Mike's Tao. This issue also has a rant on bad driving, a rant about the Cleveland Indians' new stadium, and some reviews. And while I've now read three issues, I still don't know what Tao means.

SLURP #9 (PO Box 125, Flourtown PA 19031 \$1) A big newspaper style zine dedicated to the rave scene. There are scene reports from across the country, an interview with some deejays, and lots of record reviews. If you're into the funky techno danse rave thing, this is the place to check it out.

SPOT #2, #Free, #Floor (195 Killarney Dr, Berkeley Hts NJ 07922 SASE) A messy, fun, kitchen sink minizine. Issue 2 has a page on Tilt, a cartoon about how to date rock star, a Supersuckers review, a letter from Danny of Screaming Weasel, tips on kissing, a pancake recipe...you get the idea.. #3 (called #Free) includes chats with Joe Queer, some live reviews, a quesadilla recipe (spelled quesadillas), and a review of the editors' band's demo tape. #4 (the Floor issue) includes an interview with Puggie, a live Bikini Kill review, record and zine reviews, and some cool band photos.

STAIN #5 (702 N 5th St #1F, Philadelphia PA 19123 \$3) These guys are into everything, a lot of it on the kinky side... There's an interview with Chris Thompson, toy reviews, comix, a piece on the Genitorturers, God And Texas, Therapy?, record reviews, some good photos, and live show reviews. Well done and it comes with a bonux flexi-disc featuring Temple Of Bon Matin and Ghenghis Khan Experience.

STEVE ALBINI THINKS WE SUCK #4 (Mo Ryan, 1651 Catalpa, Chicago IL 60640 \$2) Mo always has something interesting to say, whether it's on Chrissie Hynde (as an anti-role model for women in rock) or Lollapalooza. This issue also includes Rollerskate Skinny, Motorhome, L7, Flaming Lips, and reviews.

SUBREPTION #1 (Brendan, 2022 Durand Dr, Reston VA 22091 \$1) A punkzine with all the usuals - some reviews, interview with Snapcase, and lots of photos of virile young men with angry faces.

SUBURBAN VOICE #35 (Box 2746, Lynn MA 01903 \$3.50) One of the classic

American punkzines and still going strong, this issue has interviews with All, Alcohol Funnycar, the Buzzcocks, Doughboys, and lots more, the usual slew of record reviews and photos, and a terrific 7 inch featuring Shades Apart, Bombshell, and Doc Hopper.

SUCK! #6 (298 Oxford St, Rochester NY 14607 \$2) Here's another zine that takes punkzine basics and turns them into something new and interesting. There's a lot of inside jokes about the local scene (didn't know Rochester had one, didja?) plus gossip plucked off the Internet, a list of official Sonic Youth guitar tunings, and lots of zine and record reviews.

SURPRISE ATTACK #1 (PO Box 90008, Harrisburg PA 17109 \$2) ThiXs zXine is sXo straightedge, they pXut an eXtra X into almost every wXord in the thXing. Computer scanned photos of healthy young vegan boys wielding guitars, lots of ads for sXe bands, and lots of sXe attXituXde.

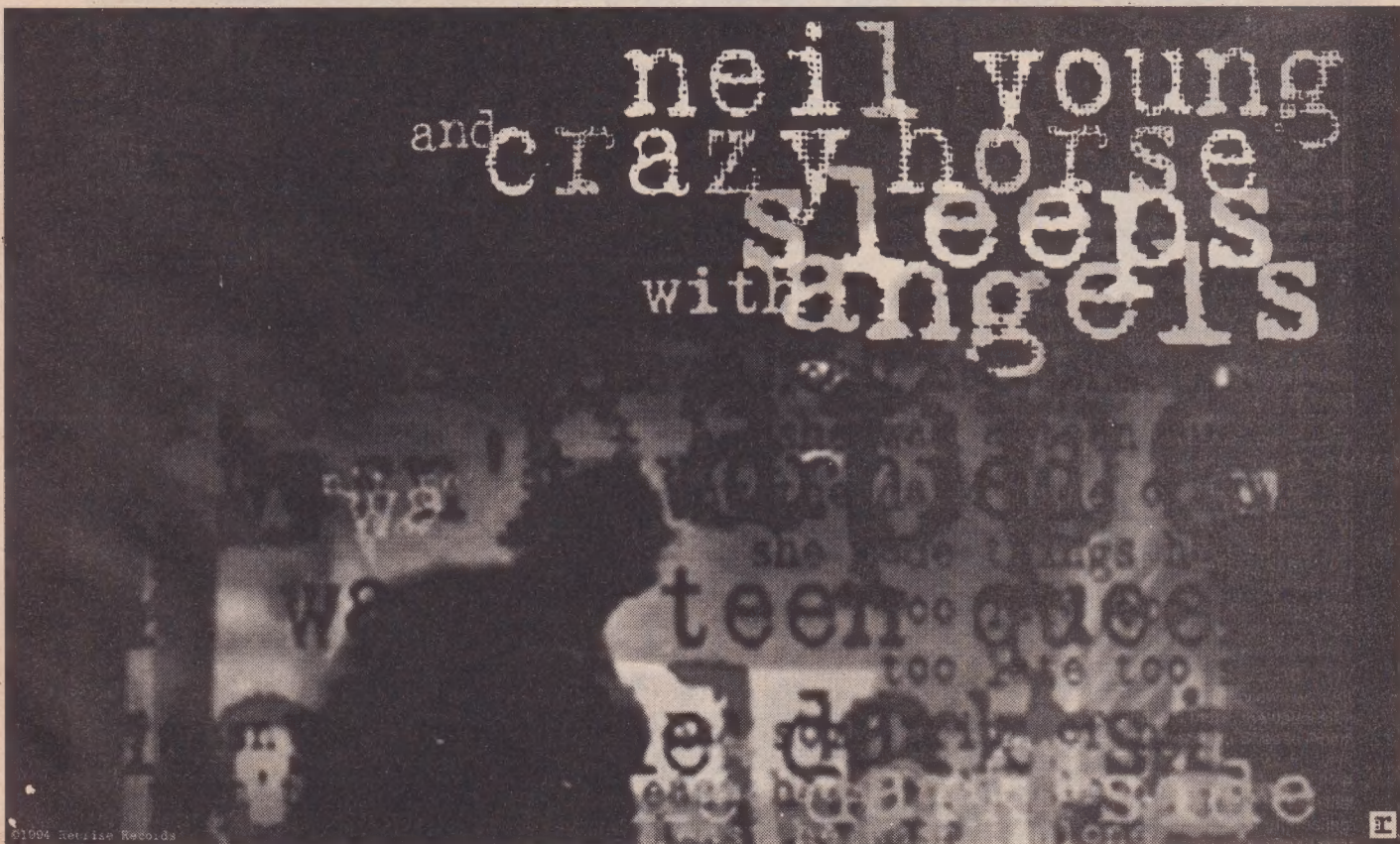
TAILSPINS Vol.3, No. 15 (PO Box 5467, Evanston IL 60204 \$2) A well done and diverse zine concentrating on alternative indie music, with Throneberry, Monomen, Babe The Blue Ox, columns, reviews, and a good Chicago scene report.

THICKER #1 (PO Box 881983, San Francisco CA 94188 \$4) Four bucks includes a bonus 7inch featuring unreleased tunes by Ken (Moving Targets) Chambers, an in-depth interview with Brad and Steve (as in Albini) of Shellac, talks with Superchunk, Kenny Chambers, Kustomized, comix, reviews, and some good photos. Well written with some nice layouts, especially for a first issue.

THIEVES & PROSTITUTES #11 (PO Box 13484, St Pete FL 33733 \$2) Since Clearwater FL is the deathmetal capital of the world, it's no surprise this St. Pete zine includes Church Of Satan, Circle Of Dust, Brainchild, Acheron, and a whole bunch of other demonic grind bands, all slapped together with diabolically sloppy layouts.

THORAZINE #5 (Box 571562, Houston TX 77257 \$3.50) Increasingly pro-looking zine with a nice glossy color cover and a flexi-disc with cuts by Anal Cunt, Boredoms, Dixie Waste, and Eyehategod. This issue includes interviews with Mule, Luscious Jackson, and Joey Ramone, plus lots more. Crammed with text and features, and with the flexi it's a bargain.

neil young
and crazy horse
sleeps
with angels



TONGUE BATH #3 (PO Box 23275, Baltimore MD 21203 \$1.50+3 stamps) These guys don't write about music, they attack it with a lot of enthusiasm and attitude, which makes the interviews and reviews jump off the page. Cool layouts too.

TRUSTKILL #2 (%Josh Grabelle, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls NJ 07724 \$2) Another straightedge zine with the usual slew of beefcake show photos, but at least this one has a sense of humor (the Hardcore High School Proficiency Exam is a riot) and the interviews ask more than the usual "are you guys vegan?" type questions. Josh also goes right to the source and interviews the god Krsna for the lowdown on Krishna hardcore. This is straight edge with a soul and definitely worth checking out.

TV EYE #1 (PO Box 914, No Hollywood CA 91603 \$2) The zine begins with the two editors watching MTV and commenting on the parade of videos, then there are a lot of Internet message chains, including Courtney Love Cobain's infamous rants on AMERICA OnLine and another on the origin of riot grrl.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION #2 (Lucinda, 202 Drum Hill Rd, Wilton CT 06897 \$1) A basic xeroxed punkzine. Interviews with Brutally Familiar and Canada's Blood Sausage, reviews, and a Star Wars collectibles column.

UNDERDOG ZINE #8, #9 (PO Box 14182, Chicago IL 60614 \$1) From the nice folks at Underdog Records, this collects Chicago punk scene news. #8 includes a long piece about the famous "Dummy Room Incident" which involved Screeching Weasel and mace, among other things, pieces on cool bands, stores, and punk politics in the Windy City scene. #9 includes a feature on Homocore Chicago and a rant against the post office. Definitely worth a look, plus there's an Underdog catalog in the back with lots of cool stuff to buy.

VILLAGE NOIZE #16 (48-54 213 St, Bayside NY 11364 \$2.50) Pro looking zine with color cover and interviews with Nine Inch Nails, Medicine, Therapy?, Girls Vs Boys, and Kyuss, plus the usual reviews, etc.

VISIBILITY ZERO #1 (449 W Ferry #2, Buffalo NY 14213 \$1) A zine dedicated to the "unknown visual art world," which amounts to pages of striking original artwork by people who also contribute to other zines. Steve Annunzia's

political caricatures are amazing and editor Joel Menter's art is very good as well. A great place to check out up and coming zine art.

VISION ON #8 (27 Springbank Croft, Holmfirth, W Yorkshire ENGLAND HD7 1LW \$3) This British zine usually concentrates on American indie rock, so it's no surprise to find the Thin White Douche, Steve Albini, interviewed (ostensibly as part of his band Shellac.) There's also features on the Hard Ons, Voodoo Glow Skulls, D.O.A., and Exit Condition, plus a good record reviews section.

WHAT ME WORRY? #5 (% James Turri, 1013 Ridge St, Freeland PA 18224 \$1) A perzine recounting the editor's adventures with different bands (Bouncing Souls, Turmoil,) comix, a Parasites interview, phone scams, and lots of reviews. Plus a cool color cover.

WHITE BREAD ZINE #12 (RPO 4601, PO Box 5063, New Brunswick NJ 08903 \$2) A nice mix of punkzine essentials and fun stuff - the band interviews include Trumans Water, Low, Grifters, and Teenage Velvet. And then there are tips on hair care, 15 cool things you can find in the editor's apartment, getting an HIV test, an open letter to MRR, and lots of reviews.

YOU COULD DO WORSE #2 (PO Box 74647, Cedar Rapids, IA 52407, or e-mail YCDWorse@aol.com \$2) The question "Whatever happened to the Feelies?" (who happened to be one of the most revered Big Star-influenced groups of the eighties) is answered in the second issue of You Could Do Worse, which includes features on the post-Feelies groups Wake Ooloo and Luna. I guess a lot of bands pass through Iowa on tour these days, because this Cedar Rapids-based zine also includes well-written interviews with the indie-pop groups like the Connells, Possum Dixon, and Five-Eight, along with a column on world beat music and a comprehensive record reviews section.

ZERO HOUR #1 (% James Suh, 210 Lake St #3C, Ithaca NY 14850 \$2) Another straight edge zine, so you know there'll be lots of photos, an interview with the ubiquitous Snapcase, think pieces on veganism and animal abuse, and a page of talk show reviews.

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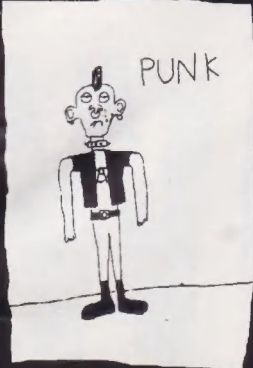


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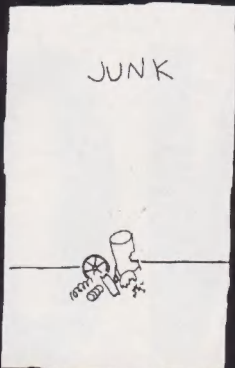
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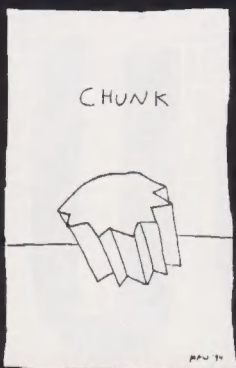
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